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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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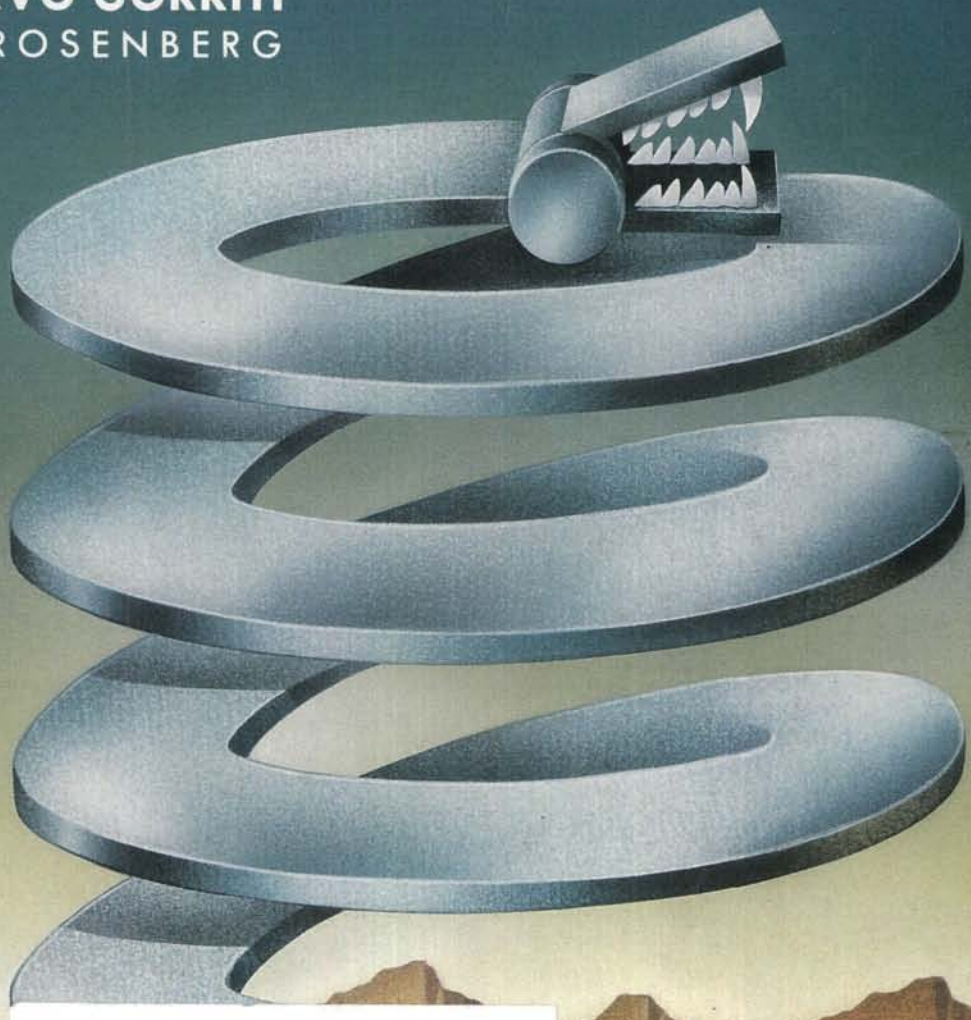
ON PERU'S SHINING PATH

GUSTAVO GORRITI
TINA ROSENBERG



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CORRESPONDENCE

Losing ground

To the editors:

As a longtime liberal Democrat, I too would welcome election to the U.S. Senate of two black Democrats ("Altered States," May 28). But under the U.S. Constitution, statehood for the District of Columbia requires more than just a referendum in the District and acceptance by a majority of Congress; it requires either the permission of Maryland or a constitutional amendment.

Article I, Section 8, clause 17 of the Constitution empowers Congress "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever" over "the seat of the government of the United States." Congress may delegate to the District powers of self-government but cannot completely divest itself of plenary power over the District. A constitutional amendment would solve this problem. But in the late 1970s and early 1980s only sixteen states—far fewer than the required three-fourths—ratified an amendment merely granting the District representation in Congress.

The other possibility is for Congress to declare that "the seat of the government" no longer includes the residential or other non-governmental sections of the District. But this approach encounters a different constitutional obstacle. The District of Columbia consists of territory acquired, in the language of clause 17, "by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress." For Congress to remove certain areas in the District from "the seat of the government" would require revoking its "acceptance" of those areas, which would then revert to Maryland, the state that originally ceded them. Under Article IV, Section 3, paragraph 1, "No new state shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other state . . . without the consent of the legislatures of the states concerned as well as of the Congress."

DAVID C. SOBELSOHN
Detroit, Michigan

Taking exemption

To the editors:

Where did Robert B. Reich get the idea that tax-exempt charities are automatically subsidized by the government ("The Compassionate Conservative," May 21)? Doesn't he know the difference between paying for his date and going dutch? My dictionary defines subsidy as "direct pecuniary aid," or a "grant or contribution of money." In wider terms, subsidies are gifts. I do not subsidize a grocery store when I buy groceries. The government does not subsidize the president because it pays him a salary. The government does engage in subsidies when it issues welfare checks or NEA grants, charges magazines less than true postage costs, or pays more than market price for milk.

Nonprofits sometimes benefit from the services of their governments, but nowhere near the value of the taxes they pay anyway: sales taxes, property taxes, payroll taxes. Besides, if tax deductions are subsidies, why not a word of praise for Ronald Reagan for slashing marginal "subsidy" rates from 70 to 28 percent? According to Reich's thesis, that alone should have eliminated more than half the problem.

TELFORD WORK
Los Angeles, CA

Keys to 'The Piano Lesson'

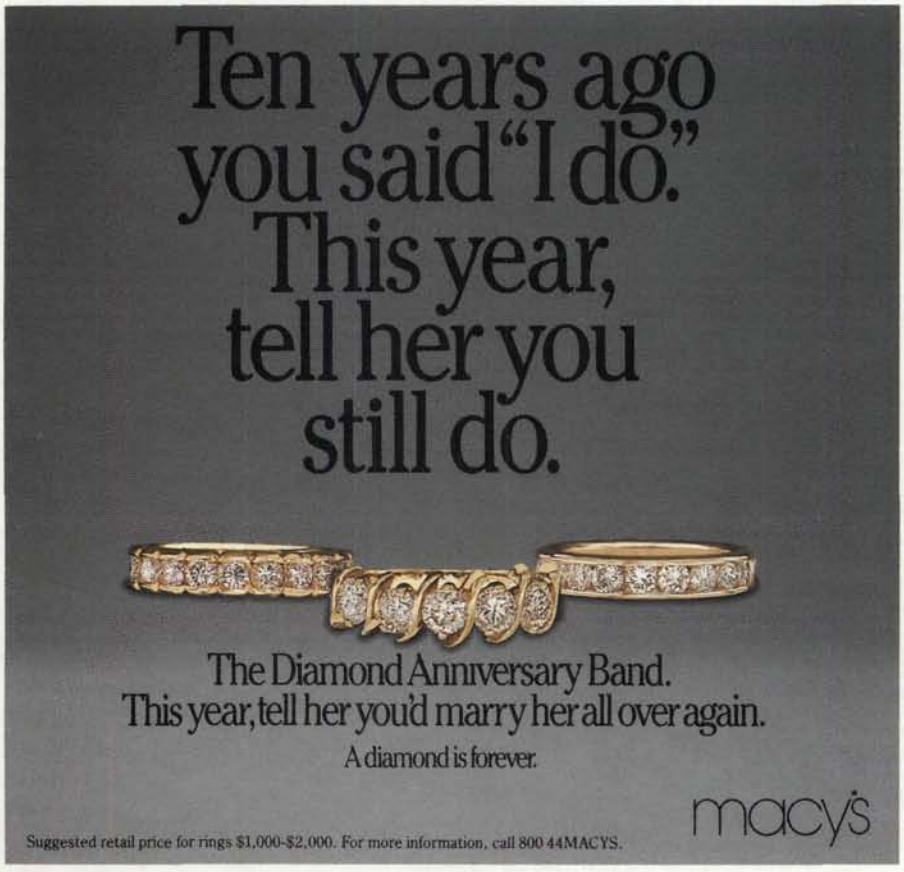
To the editors:

I am amazed that someone as intelligent as Robert Brustein is also so narrow-minded. Saying that August Wilson's *Fences* "shows black athletes were prevented from participating in major league sports" is like saying *Death of a Salesman* is about a man who cheats on his wife ("The Lesson of 'The Piano Lesson,' " May 21). These are events in a character's past that inform present action, not accurate descriptions of the plays themselves. And to dismiss Wilson's plays as "the cultural equivalent of affirmative action" is to miss the point completely. One can no more write about blacks in America without discussing racism than one can write about European Jews without discussing the Holocaust, or about Native Americans without discussing the theft of their land. Wilson gives another voice to the black experience in America, and so gives another voice to the American experience. If the voice is too mainstream for Brustein's tastes, it is eloquent and provocative for most of us. As for "white culpability and black martyrdom," I find no martyrs in Wilson's plays, only people who make choices. It is not guilt, as Brustein believes, that draws white theatergoers like me to Wilson's works, but identification.

LAURA KAMINKER
New York, New York

To the editors:

An ivory tower insistence on doctrine over open-eyed acceptance of the realities of life seems to be fueling Robert Brustein's contention that there is something immoral, or at the very least suspect, in the practice of resident, not-for-profit institutional theaters doing work that is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aimed at commercial consumption. Brustein has been vocally dismayed for many years over the possible downfall of the institutional theater in America as it is tempted to become a supplier of commercial product for New York's stages.

The theory is sound, to the degree that one acknowledges the intrinsic superiority of "non-commercial" plays over "commercial" ones. But how can one measure such things? No matter what one thinks of *The Piano Lesson*, it is hardly a more obviously commercial bet than *Big River* or *Mastergate*, both of which have emerged from the stage of Brustein's American Repertory Theatre to achieve one degree or another of success on Broadway. Shouldn't the actual results of a theater's artistic efforts be as much of a basis for judgment as its contract negotiations with commercial managements? And where is the evidence of Brustein's theory proved out? Has the institutional theater measurably declined in the years since that first commercial transfer of *The Great White Hope* from Washington's Arena Stage in 1967?

Certainly some theaters have more integrity than others. But *The Piano Lesson* cannot remotely be mistaken for a theatrical get-rich-quick scheme. How can anyone doubt that by creating a circuit of theaters, each of which provided production space and time for *The Piano Lesson* in its long journey to completion, Yale has managed to create a parenting process for the play that has admirably carried it to full flower through a long and difficult process? Certainly no other institutional theater before has been this committed to the completion of a single work of art.

JACK VIERTEL
New York, New York

The writer is creative director of the Jujamcyn Theaters.

Robert Brustein replies:

There are two separate issues here that I inadvertently joined in my review of *The Piano Lesson*. The first has to do with the quality of the play and production; the second with the way the work was brought to Broadway. I do not wish to argue with those who genuinely enjoyed the play—there *is* no arguing with taste. And I may indeed have been too reductive in saying what *Fences* was "about," though I remain convinced that all of Wilson's plays derive from a similar perception—the decade-by-decade documentation of what I called "white culpability and black martyrdom." Considering the controversy aroused by this remark, it is important to note that the black scholar Shelby Steele made a similar point (in *The New York Times Magazine*) the week my review appeared—namely, that many black people, by concentrating too much on victimization, were preventing themselves from moving ahead socially (I said that Wilson, "locked in a perception of victimization," was not moving ahead artistically). I did not, as the *Times* reported in its May 15 article on the controversy, say that the "black experience" itself was "repetitive." Nor did I suggest, as Wilson concluded, that he shouldn't write about black people—this would have been presumptuous and absurd. But the sameness of theme and style in the cycle thus far—and the repetitiveness of the *writing* of his new play—are what affected my appreciation of *The Piano Lesson*.

Laura Kaminker says that you can't write about blacks without "discussing racism" any more than you can write about European Jews without "discussing the Holocaust." But dramatic art and "discussion" are not always the same thing, and I admit to being as fatigued by Jonathan Sobol's Holocaust-obsessed plays as by Wilson's essays on racism. Let me add that my role as a drama critic—whose task is to assess quality—is not the same as my function as a citizen concerned with redressing wrongs, and I still believe it possible to be a compassionate human being without suspending one's artistic standards.

The "parenting" process Jack Viertel describes with such enthusiasm as bringing the play "to full flower" is nothing more than a subsidized version of the old commercial tryout system cycling Broadway-bound shows to Philadelphia, Boston, and New Haven, while producers, playwrights, and directors hole up in the Taft or the Ritz making changes. This system was responsible for the compromised ending of Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and I would bet it was responsible for the implausibly positive resolution of *The Piano Lesson*, which was substituted somewhere en route for a more honest, if less commercial, final scene where nothing was resolved.

It may indeed sometimes be difficult to distinguish "commercial" from "noncommercial" plays, and no one wants to prevent a good play from having an extended life. But it shouldn't be so difficult to distinguish nonprofit resident theaters from Broadway producers (for the record, none of the plays originated by the American Repertory Theatre ever went on to Broadway with our cooperation or participation). I am not suggesting that Mr. Viertel is interested in "get-rich-quick schemes," but being on the staff of one of the show's producers, and as a former critic himself, he is primarily interested in results. If he truly wants to preserve the quality and aspiration of the theaters that generate product for his houses, he ought to join "the ivory tower" and become more interested in the process by which these results are achieved. •

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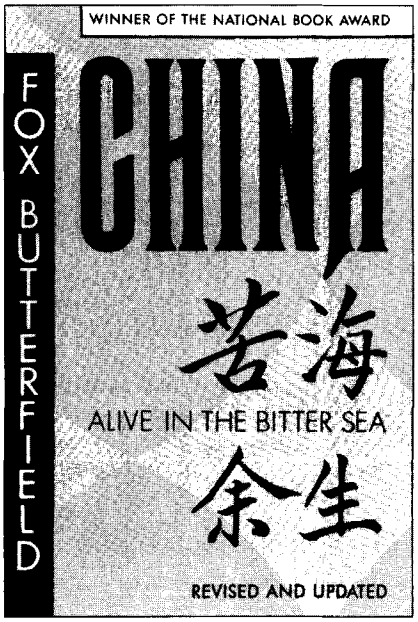

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TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

The corn is green

On Sunday morning, when they ought to be in church, many Americans are worshiping at the shrine of Public Affairs, watching the TV interview shows. A strange subgenre of advertising has evolved to service these shows, in which corporations tout their patriotism rather than their products. We learn how General Electric brought freedom to Eastern Europe, how Merrill Lynch is enriching the nation, and so on.

But Sunday morning is dominated by a mysterious company that is virtually unknown for anything *except* its public affairs commercials: Archer Daniels Midland ("supermarket to the world"). ADM's only other claim to fame is its chairman, Dwayne Andreas, who is notorious for his large campaign contributions to both parties (Bush *and* Dukakis in the last presidential election), and for running a resort in Florida where Bob and Elizabeth Dole, Tip O'Neill, and Robert Strauss own units.

On a typical recent Sunday, May 27, ADM had five different ads running in various combinations on all three network shows: ABC's *This Week with David Brinkley*, NBC's *Meet the Press*, and CBS's *Face the Nation*. (Brinkley is another resident of Andreas's Florida resort.) The ADM ads are like "Twin Peaks": lavishly produced and full of plot, they convey an ominous feeling that something is going on, without any clear sense of what that might be. I can't begin to explain "Twin Peaks," but the comically deceptive ADM commercials are not all that hard to decode. Prizes are hereby awarded in the following categories:

Most offensive. This one begins with a clip of JFK proclaiming, "Ask not what your country can do for you . . .," and goes on to declare—in one of those warm, gravelly voices corporations choose to impersonate themselves—"At the Archer Daniels Midland Company, history has taught us that doing what's good for our country can also be good for business." ADM's main line of business is refining corn into high-fructose corn sweetener and ethanol, a gasoline additive. Both products depend on massive government subsidies and trade protection. There is probably no company in America where the question "what your country can do for you" is asked more often or answered more successfully.

Most dishonest. A man is climbing an ever-steeper staircase. Each step represents the number of minutes the average citizen of a particular country has to work to afford a pound of sugar—ranging from the United States (little bump) at 1.47 to China (sheer cliff face) at 74. The point is supposed to be that America is blessed with cheap sugar. The purpose is to quell any doubts about the government's insane sugar price support program.

What's wonderful is that ADM *doesn't make sugar!* Its interest in sugar price supports is solely as maker of a rival product, corn sweetener for food and soft drinks, which would have no market if sugar could be sold here at the world price. Artificially high sugar prices, maintained by quotas on foreign sugar, cost consumers more than $3 billion a year. The quotas are devastating to emerging democracies such as the Philippines, far outweighing what we give in foreign aid.

Obviously the fact that the average Chinese must work fifty times longer for a pound of sugar than the average American has almost nothing to do with the price of sugar and everything to do with relative national wealth. The average Chinese must work longer for *everything* because the average Chinese is paid so little. In fact, America's GDP per capita is fifty-*eight* times that of China, making sugar look like a relative bargain for the Chinese.

(Another ADM ad on the sugar theme, slightly less deceptive, merely notes that American sugar is—slightly—cheaper in absolute terms than sugar in other advanced countries such as France and Germany. That just demonstrates that we're not the only fools in the world. It certainly does *not* demonstrate that, as the ad puts it, sugar is "a sweet deal for everyone." It's a sweet deal for the average American sugar cane farmer, who makes a quarter of a million dollars from the sugar program, and for ADM, which makes millions. It's a big gyp for the rest of us.)

Most cloying. A woman pulls up at the gas pump and, in a voice-over while filling up, expresses her joy over ethanol. "Now that pure grain ethanol has replaced lead in gas, the air's a lot cleaner for everyone, especially kids." Actually, of course, the air is exactly the same amount cleaner for kids as for adults.

continued on page 49

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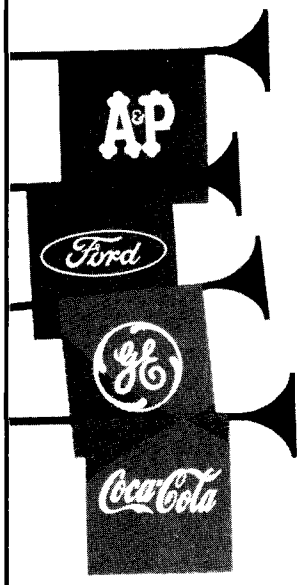

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JUNE 18, 1990

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,935

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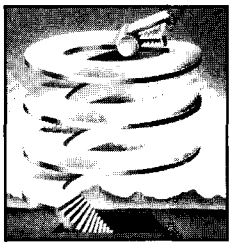

Cover by Theo Rudnak for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 15 and 23.

2 CORRESPONDENCE D.C. statehood, 'subsidizing' charities, piano lessons, &c.

4 MICHAEL KINSLEY **TRB: THE CORN IS GREEN** High-fructose baloney from ADM.

7 THE EDITORS **DOLLARS AND DEATH SQUADS** Unless American aid is cut, the Salvadoran military will never change. **NOTEBOOK** Lech Walesa's cigarette habit, &c.

9 FRED BARNES **WHITE HOUSE WATCH: PRESSURE POINTS** George Bush is now leaning on Israeli hard-liners rather than Arab 'moderates' to make concessions in the Mideast.

10 JACOB WEISBERG **PLAYING FAVORITES** Bush's decision to renew 'MFN' for China while denying it to the Soviet Union exposes a gigantic double standard.

13 ROBERT S. MCINTYRE AND BRUCE FISHER **WITHHOLDING FIRE** Democrats are terrified to talk about taxes at all. A better strategy would be to call for raising them—but only for the very rich.

15 GUSTAVO GORRITI **THE WAR OF THE PHILOSOPHER-KING** Abimael Guzmán—the mysterious 'Presidente Gonzalo' of the Shining Path, the 'Fourth Sword of World Revolution,' the 'Red Sun'—took a ragtag band of campus Communists and turned them into the feared and violent Shining Path. Crazy though they seem, he and his disciples now pose a greater threat to Peru than ever before.

23 TINA ROSENBERG **GUERRILLA TOURISM** A guided tour through the netherworld of Sendero Luminoso, whose members have no doubt that victory will ultimately be theirs.

26 A SYMPOSIUM **ON CIVIC LIBERALISM** What kind of equality? Michael Kinsley, Robert Kuttner, and Mark Lilla pick fights with Mickey Kaus, who fights back.

30 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: SELLING, SHOOTING, STAGING** *Cadillac Man* stalls; *Fire Birds* fizzles; *Jesus of Montreal* is labored.

32 ROBERT BRUSTEIN **ON THEATER: THE NEA BELLY UP** America's art policy of fear.

34 ERNEST GELLNER **ETHNICITY UNBOUND** *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the U.S.S.R.* by Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda

37 CZESLAW MILOSZ **FOR VILNIUS** A refugee argues for Lithuanian independence.

40 MICHAEL IGNATIEFF **THE LIMITS OF SAINTHOOD** *Utopian Pessimist: The Life and Thought of Simone Weil* by David McLellan; *Simone Weil: An Intellectual Biography* by Gabriella Fiori; *Simone Weil: The Just Balance* by Peter Winch; *A Truer Liberty: Simone Weil and Marxism* by Lawrence A. Blum and Victor J. Seidler

42 STEWART JAMES **POEM** *My Father's Kierkegaard*

46 STANLEY KATZ **DISORDER IN THE COURTS** *The Transformation of Criminal Justice: Philadelphia, 1800-1880* by Allen Steinberg

50 MARTIN PERETZ **PARIS DIARIST: SOFT ON HARD-LINERS** Bush and Baker have become predictable about bashing America's friends and bolstering its enemies.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 202, Number 25 Issue 3,935, June 18, 1990. (Printed in the U.S. on May 30, 1990.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 9 & 16, July 30 & Aug. 6, Aug. 20 & 27, and Sept. 10 & 17, 1990) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $59.97; foreign, $89.97; Canada, $74.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1990 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

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JUNE 18, 1990

DOLLARS AND DEATH SQUADS

With its seemingly incurable contempt for law and human decency, the Salvadoran military has very nearly exhausted the patience of its great benefactor, the United States. A majority of the U.S. House of Representatives served notice on May 22 that it is prepared to cut military aid to El Salvador in half right now, and if the government cannot bring military killers to justice, to cut it off entirely. High officials of the Bush administration say they are "fed up" with the military's violations of human rights. They have quietly informed Congress that they are changing U.S. policy. The administration still opposes an outright cut in aid but now says it is willing to condition aid on improved respect for human rights and on good-faith performance in negotiations with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

In the case of Nicaragua, the administration creatively worked out agreements with Congress and the Soviet Union that ultimately got results. It's not too much to hope that something analogous might now happen in El Salvador. We agree with Congress that Salvador's military needs the cold shock of an immediate reduction in aid. But we also agree with the administration—and with Democratic moderates such as Representative Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma—that the military should be able to earn back its aid if it truly sets itself on the road to reform. Congress and the administration should agree upon a deadline—say, one year from now—after which, if specific moves toward reform are not taken, further military cuts will be imposed.

The administration opposes any immediate aid cut because it says this will undermine elected President Alfredo Cristiani just as he enters peace talks with the FMLN. But we see no other way to get the military's attention, and we think it's in Cristiani's own interest that the military be brought under control. For ten years the United States has been feeding the military, arming it, training it, and trying to convert it into a defender of democracy, rather than an oppressor of its own people, at a total cost of $900 million.

It's not quite fair to say there is nothing to show for this. In 1980 and 1981 some 800 civilians a month were butchered by death squads connected to the government. Nowadays the civilian death rate is twenty per month. This is still appalling—imagine the uproar if the perpetrator was the Soviet army in Lithuania—but it must be counted a kind of progress. The military used to stage coups against elected leaders it opposed; now it lets them run at least the civilian side of government. And the military is supporting the current government's participation in U.N.-supervised peace talks with the FMLN.

Yet murder and other abuse of civilians continue, corruption has mounted, military efficiency has not improved, and no officer is ever punished for wrongdoing. In the most egregious recent case, Colonel Guillermo Benavides is in custody in connection with the murder last November 16 of six prominent Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter—but suddenly the investigation has bogged down, evidence is missing, and leads pointing to involvement by an even higher-ranking officer, Vice Minister of Defense Juan Zepeda, are not being followed up. In an earlier case—that of the massacre of ten peasants in the village of San Sebastian in September 1988—all defendants except one have been freed. A major who is thought to have ordered the crime remains in custody, but U.S. officials suspect that since the perpetrators

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are free, they will not testify against their commander. The San Sebastian case, by the way, is one that Vice President Dan Quayle and U.S. Ambassador William Walker had said was a crucial test of Salvadoran justice.

In fact, in every well-known case—from the killing of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 to the rape-murder of four American churchwomen in 1980 to the assassination of two American labor organizers in 1981 to the operation of a kidnap ring by high-ranking army officers—no military officer has ever gone to jail. Nor has any officer been punished for the thousands of deaths, rapes, tortures, and thefts inflicted on civilians by the military. Occasionally an officer will be relieved of command, as happened to well-connected Colonel Mauricio Staben, the alleged mastermind of the kidnap ring. But in most cases officers are simply promoted to higher rank on the basis of military academy class solidarity—regardless of wrongdoing, and regardless of military valor or (more commonly) lack of it.

The military is under fire not only from Democrats in Congress, many of whom have long wanted to slash aid regardless of the assistance this might lend the FMLN, but also from U.S. Embassy officials in San Salvador. One recent congressional task force report showed that fourteen of the fifteen highest-ranking officers in the Salvadoran army (eleven of them U.S.-trained) have commanded troops who have repeatedly committed serious human rights abuses. Another team accused the military of "corruption, incompetence, and frequent failure to accept civilian authority" and concluded, "The problems of human rights and a paralyzed judicial system are not caused by a few renegade officers, but reside at the heart of the armed forces as an institution."

The U.S. Embassy, which formerly resisted reductions in military aid, is sounding a new tune. Ambassador Walker, asked by *The Washington Post* if the Salvadoran military breeds in its men any ability to distinguish right from wrong, paused for a long moment and said, "I really don't know. . . . I think there is greater awareness than there was ten years ago." Another embassy official told Phil Bronstein of *The San Francisco Examiner* that "trying to reform them is like squeezing a bag of water. Now we have to play hardball. We're now basically supporting the move to condition or cut military aid."

The administration reportedly has drawn up a specific agenda of reforms that it wants to see the military undertake. These include a merit promotion system, financial disclosures by officers, a code of conduct, creation of an inspector general's office, and removal of certain current high-ranking officers with foul records. Members of Congress have suggested other reforms, such as funneling military aid through Cristiani, establishing a truly independent judiciary, and successfully prosecuting the Jesuits' and San Sebastian murder cases.

Were the military seriously to undertake these reforms, it should be able to earn back the full $85 million in aid that the Bush administration requested for fiscal year 1991. Under legislation passed by the House on March 22, then defeated in a subsequent procedural vote but certain to be revived in June, restoration of aid could take place only if the FMLN failed to negotiate with the government in good faith or if "the survival of the constitutional government of El Salvador is being jeopardized by substantial and sustained offensive military operations by the FMLN." Restoration of military aid should depend not merely upon the FMLN's bad behavior, but also on good behavior by the military.

The last decade's history of American policy in El Salvador is littered with administration promises that the military would shape up if only the aid kept flowing. A certain cynicism is therefore in order. Even so, the Bush administration has earned the right to some leeway in running Salvadoran policy. It proved in Nicaragua that it is far more flexible than the Reagan administration. It is no longer driving for an unattainable military victory in El Salvador. It is pushing for a negotiated peace, which it believes is more possible than ever before, thanks to the withdrawal of Soviet influence from the region, the defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and Manuel Noriega in Panama, the legitimacy of the Cristiani government, and the failure of the FMLN's 1989 offensive to ignite general insurrection in the country.

In the past, every time the FMLN has promised to negotiate it has merely used the time to plan another "final" offensive. But the FMLN has never before had much reason to believe that the U.S. and the Salvadoran government would ever move negotiations beyond the minimum required to placate Congress. That may now be changing. A real solution for El Salvador would require the FMLN to realize that it cannot win a military victory and to agree, as several other guerrilla movements in Latin America have done, to come in from the hills and participate in the political process. The other half of a solution would require the Salvadoran military to be induced, or coerced, to respect the agreement and the rule of law. If the administration is right and circumstances are forcing the FMLN to talk peace, it is incumbent upon the United States also to create circumstances whereby the military will respect civilian authority.

This will require more than tough talk. It will require some tough action, too. Of course, there is never a "good" time to cut military aid to an embattled friendly government like El Salvador's. It can always be argued that the regime is about to enter negotiations, or is in negotiations, or needs to be coaxed into negotiations. But the present moment—when there is no danger of defeat on the battlefield, and when a rebuke to the military might actually strengthen the hand of the civilian authorities—is in fact a relatively opportune one. Ten years of "next time" threats have created a deficit in Washington's credibility balance in San Salvador. A measured cut in aid would put it back in the black. And a cut now might avoid a situation in which what we end up cutting down the road is not our aid but our losses.

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NOTEBOOK

CATERING TO HYSTERIA: Recently the House passed, to widespread acclaim, the Americans with Disabilities Act, which extends civil rights protections to handicapped people. The bill was a sound one, which deserved support. Final passage was marred, however, by the attachment of an amendment—overlooked in press reports—that allows discrimination against people with AIDS. Although the legislation already permitted employers to discriminate against people with infectious diseases that pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others, Representative Jim Chapman of Texas thought it would be a good idea also to let them discriminate against people with AIDS, who *don't* pose a threat. His argument for the amendment, which passed on a 199-187 floor vote, is that restaurant owners and others who employ food handlers shouldn't suffer because of a publicly perceived risk—even though Chapman acknowledges that the perception is baseless. The Centers for Disease Control says AIDS cannot be transmitted through food handling. But, says Chapman, "The reality is that many Americans would refuse to patronize any food establishment if any employee were known to have a communicable disease." This is the logic that the Kokomo school board used to bar Ryan White from attending classes. True, some people won't patronize a restaurant where a waiter has AIDS, or has leukemia, or is black, or worships in a mosque. But since when do irrational fears and prejudices justify legal discrimination? The Chapman Amendment is bad public policy. It's a nasty excrescence on an otherwise fine piece of work.

BLECH: In the newest Philip Morris ad, Lech Walesa's photo appears next to the quotation: "I've read your Bill of Rights a hundred times and I'll probably read it a hundred more before I die." Or maybe Walesa will only have time to read it fifty more times, or maybe only a dozen . . . it depends on whether he keeps smoking Marlboros. How did the Solidarity leader get roped into lending his name to this preposterous propaganda campaign? According to Guy L. Smith, the company's vice president of public affairs, "He doesn't speak English and I don't speak Polish." Apparently, however, they both speak vigorish.

DEPARTMENT OF SIMULTANEITY: An accident it was, surely, that Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady's announcement about the savings and loan bailout costing yet another $59 billion happened at the same time as Neil Bush's testimony about the failure of his Denver S&L. After all, millions of things were happening all over the world at 10 a.m. on May 23, and these were merely two of them. Because of the timing, regular beat reporters had to make a decision about which event was more important to cover. The majority opted for Brady, with the result that the young Bush's embarrassing disclosures toppled to the bottom of the front page of most newspapers, or off it entirely in some cases. But this, we repeat, was obviously pure coincidence. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

PRESSURE POINTS

By Fred Barnes

On May 22, two days after a crazed Israeli gunned down seven Palestinian workers and touched off rioting by Palestinians, President Bush issued a written statement. He expressed his "sympathies" and "condolences" for the families of Palestinians who died in the shooting and subsequent rioting. He urged "Israeli security forces" to show "maximum restraint." The next day Secretary of State James Baker said he was "prepared to discuss" the idea of sending a United Nations observer team to the violence-torn West Bank and Gaza Strip. The day after that Bush twice said he is "troubled" by the death of Palestinians in clashes with Israeli soldiers. "I think particularly of children in this kind of situation," he said at a press conference. "What moves me most is the children," he told a French TV interviewer.

This was not-so-subtle, sustained pressure that proved a point: in dealing with Israel, Bush is the heir of Jimmy Carter, not Ronald Reagan. Reagan thought of Israel as a tough, little, anti-Communist ally that deserved American support and tolerance. A Middle East peace settlement was not high on Reagan's list of priorities. Bush, however, is eager to get the "peace process" moving again. Like Carter, he thinks the Israelis are the biggest impediment to this. Bush also dislikes and distrusts Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister; Carter felt much the same about Menachem Begin. Bush's pals in the Middle East are two Arab "moderates," King Hussein of Jordan and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; Carter's best friend was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. Like Carter, Bush thinks the Israelis need to be leaned on to make concessions, the Arabs reassured that compromising with Israel is the right thing.

The Bush administration has leaned before. On March 1 Baker told a Senate committee that a $400 million loan guarantee to help Soviet immigrants settle in Israel was conditional on Israel's stopping the expansion of settlements on the West Bank. Baker backed off the next day, but there's still sentiment in the administration for tying the loan guarantee to the ceasing

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of what officials call "settlement activity." That means new settlements or expansion of old ones. On March 3 Bush weighed in with his statement that "we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem." The complaint about East Jerusalem was new, and it prompted Shamir to shun the peace process. The unity government headed by Shamir fell.

Since then—until May 22, at any rate—the administration had been "very quiet" about Israel, says a senior White House official. "That created a sort of vacuum. You had a revival of the intifada. You had the Arab world losing hope. . . . The feeling [inside the administration] was we'd been very tolerant of the vagaries of the Israeli political process." And because no good had come from that, the Bush crowd figured it was time to start exerting pressure once more. Bush had been egged on by both Mubarak and Hussein, both of whom he talked to by phone in May. But he didn't need much egging.

Bush has never been too keen on Israel. "He goes way back with the moderate Arabs," says another White House official. As vice president, Bush visited both Egypt and Jordan. (A hill in Jordan was the scene of Bush's famous question, asked of a Jordanian army officer, "How dead is the Dead Sea?") Bush has "picked up the mindset of Israel being a problem." To Bush, the aide says, "Israel is like Lithuania. It confuses things. It makes it harder to work out a deal." I think Bush also concluded that Israel can get the United States into a lot of trouble. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, Bush sided with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in favoring condemnation of the Israelis. He was leery of deploying U.S. Marines in Lebanon (correctly, it turned out). The Iran-contra deal, in which Israelis promoted the American arms sale to Iran, confirmed his feelings about Israel as a troublemaker.

Shamir made matters worse. Bush pays special attention to his personal relationship with other world leaders. When he tries, he can get along with almost anyone. But he expects them to be a little accommodating. Shamir isn't. "Nobody at the White House," says still another official, expects the Bush-Shamir relationship to improve, ever. In their first meeting in April 1989, Bush thought Shamir had promised to halt expansion of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. When expansion continued, Bush was furious. When Shamir came to Washington again last November, Bush lectured him on the settlements. In January Bush was upset by Shamir's statement that a "big Israel" is needed to cope with Soviet immigrants. To soothe Bush, Shamir called him in February and noted that less than 1 percent of Soviet Jews were settling in the West Bank. But Bush knew that 10 percent are moving into East Jerusalem, which the United States doesn't formally recognize as part of Israel. He thought Shamir was spinning him again.

Bush is obsessive on the subject of settlements. In his years as ambassador to the U.N., CIA director, and confidant to moderate Arabs, he came to view Israel's settlements policy as a roadblock to peace. Now detailed reports on settlement activity are routed to his desk, a White House official said. According to *The New York Times*, Bush has personally examined aerial photographs of housing developments in East Jerusalem. He is adamant, an aide adds, that Israel should stop "any settlement activity whatsoever." Before Israel gets the $400 million loan guarantee, Bush still wants assurances that none of the money will promote expansion of settlement in the West Bank.

This hyperconcern puts the president slightly off kilter with Baker. "The president emphasizes the settlements, Baker the peace process," says Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater. "It's not good cop, bad cop." It's because Bush hears complaints from Arab moderates about settlements, while Baker is assigned to get peace talks going. Both agree on the next step toward peace, however. That's Israel's acceptance of Palestinians from East Jerusalem or from outside the West Bank or Gaza Strip in the delegation that would meet with Israeli negotiators in Cairo. "That's the sine qua non of Middle East politics," says a White House official.

Since the Israelis won't concede this readily—certainly Shamir won't—Bush and Baker are exerting considerable pressure. Baker's comment about dispatching a U.N. team to Israel, made during a briefing on the Bush-Gorbachev summit, was not a slip. If Baker hadn't been asked a question about the Middle East then, the plan was to leak word that the administration might consider U.N. involvement. Why? To jar Israel by suggesting unpleasant alternatives if it refuses to make concessions to facilitate peace talks. Meanwhile, PLO leader Yasir Arafat was shunted off to Geneva (and kept out of New York) to avert a distracting side issue. And Bush, in all his statements, harped on the theme that only peace talks will stop the violence of the intifada. "What has to happen is these talks have to get going," Bush said. Bush may not be right on this point, but he is certain. •

Just what is 'MFN,' anyway?

PLAYING FAVORITES

By Jacob Weisberg

South Africa has most favored nation status. So do Iraq and Burma. Bulgaria and Lithuania, however, don't. Nor does Czechoslovakia, though it will probably have it soon. President Bush announced last week that the Soviet Union, which wants it, isn't going to get it. He also decided that China, which has it, will keep it unconditionally.

Though "most favored nation," or MFN, sounds like an advantage one would confer only on friends and allies, it's not a very exclusive club. More than one hundred fifty countries, including all the non-

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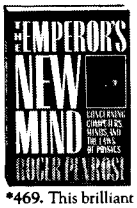

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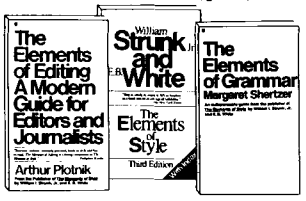
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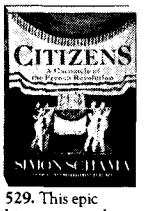

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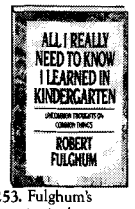

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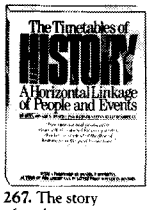

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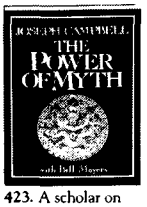

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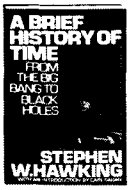

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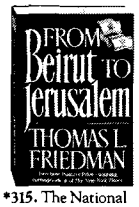

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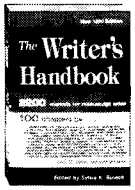

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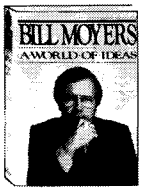

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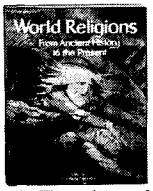

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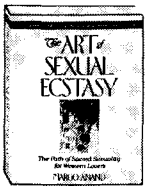

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Communist nations of the world, have MFN relations with the United States. Only sixteen "non-market" nations are denied it. MFN treatment signifies that we allow a country's imports to enter at our lowest, or "concessionary," tariffs. Not having it subjects them to punitive "full" rates. For example, the U.S. duty on vodka is $2.56 per proof gallon for most favored nations, but $6.72 for the Soviet Union and other disfavored ones. Toys, a major Chinese export, are now subject to a 7 percent tariff. If Congress were to override the president's MFN extension (which is improbable), the duty would rise to 70 percent.

Denying "normal" treatment is seldom economically advantageous. For American consumers, discriminating against a major trading partner such as China means that imported Chinese goods become more expensive and harder to find. Other suppliers will then feel free to raise their prices too. And because MFN is a reciprocal agreement, China almost certainly would retaliate for its retraction by raising customs levies against American products. This hurts U.S. companies by making their products uncompetitive.

Even so, the United States has used trade sanctions as a political tool throughout the postwar era. In 1951 President Truman signed a proclamation denying MFN to all Communist countries except Yugoslavia. No attempt was made to restore it to the Soviet Union until Nixon and Kissinger negotiated a trade pact with Leonid Brezhnev in 1972. The deal never took effect. Displeased by Soviet obstacles to Jewish emigration, Congress rejected the agreement—and, to replace it, passed an amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 sponsored by Senator Henry M. Jackson, a Washington Democrat, and Representative Charles Vanik, an Ohio Democrat.

Jackson-Vanik was designed to hold back most favored nation treatment from the Soviet Union until refuseniks were allowed to leave for Israel. The act directed the president to withhold MFN, credits, and credit guarantees from any Communist country that "denies its citizens the right or opportunity to emigrate." Under its terms, the president can grant MFN to a Communist country if it permits free emigration. His only other option is to grant a waiver of the requirement if he thinks this will promote the objectives of free emigration and has received assurances from the country that it will. It is the waiver option that Bush has exercised for China.

As Richard Perle (a former aide to the late Senator Jackson) recalls, the drafters never considered the possibility that China—then in the midst of the Cultural Revolution—would ever qualify for MFN. But a few years later the People's Republic had begun to liberalize and open to the West. In 1980 President Carter extended MFN status to China without encountering significant objection in Congress. The status has been renewed every year since. Last year it was extended just before the declaration of martial law and the massacre at Tiananmen Square. Had the Chinese cracked down a few days earlier, it is unlikely that Bush would have seen fit to press for renewal. But according to the terms of the Trade Act, free emigration is the only human rights criterion that is supposed to apply.

Because of its narrow focus, the law has required some gymnastics on Bush's part. In order to grant a waiver under Jackson-Vanik, the president has to say that China has told him it is working toward free emigration, and that he believes the assurances. To deny MFN, he is compelled to maintain that the Soviet Union does not permit free emigration. "The Soviets have not passed the necessary emigration legislation," he said at his May 24 press conference. "And China does have the proper policy."

This is, of course, exactly the opposite of what everyone knows to be the case. As Holly Burkhalter, Washington director of the human rights organization Asia Watch, testified to the House Asian affairs subcommittee, "Emigration has never been free and open in China." Though China allowed 17,000 of its citizens to leave for the United States in 1989, almost all were family reunifications, not the kind of emigration Jackson-Vanik was devised to press. Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Shuxian, remain in sanctuary in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. There are new controls on students who wish to study abroad. Emigration procedure in China is in fact a vehicle for rounding up dissidents. As Burkhalter notes, those who apply for passports must write confessions on "my performance during the period of turmoil" and "my performance during the period of rebellion."

In the Soviet Union, however, Jews are now free to go, as are the leading dissidents. Two hundred thousand Jews may leave Russia this year—many more than the United States is willing to accept as immigrants. The Supreme Soviet is set to pass a law that guarantees everyone the right to emigrate. "From my standpoint, MFN is due to them now," says Mark Talisman, a former aide to Representative Vanik who helped draft the amendment.

Bush's refusing MFN to the Soviet Union while granting it to China amounts to a massive double standard, one that is especially glaring if you compare the recent performances of the two countries on other human rights issues. Bush is holding back MFN from the Soviets because of Gorbachev's refusal to recognize Lithuanian independence. Yet China remains a far more brutal military occupier of Tibet, which has just as valid a claim to self-determination. China permits no dissent, has no freedom of speech or the press, and imprisons thousands of dissidents. The Soviet Union is awash in dissent, publishes virtually everything in the official press and tolerates thousands of unofficial publications besides, holds election after election in which the Communist Party gets trounced, permits opposition parties to organize and agitate, and has released all but about twenty of its political prisoners. Bush has argued that MFN will promote the

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goal of liberalization in China by strengthening the hand of capitalists and reformers. If this is true, it's equally the case in the USSR. As Vanik, now a lawyer-lobbyist, notes: "There is no question that the law has been unevenly administered."

There is an argument for inconsistency on trade preferences, which is that they should be used to pry concessions from countries that begin at different baselines. But Bush has not shown an interest in getting anything from China in exchange for MFN; he is unwilling to set specific conditions for renewal beyond the next year, as Burkhalter and congressional Democrats have urged him to do. Nor does he want to wring human rights concessions out of Gorbachev in exchange for a trade agreement. In the case of the Soviet Union, he has made a political decision to disregard the standard that was set down by Jackson-Vanik sixteen years ago. "I think there's a political climate in this country that would make it extraordinarily difficult to grant it," Bush said at his press conference. Now that the USSR has passed the test we set, he has unilaterally decided to change the rules.

Because the Soviet Union has objectively met our conditions, we ought to grant MFN as a matter of good faith. This is elementary. But to do so also makes practical sense. Whether or not we want to help Gorbachev stay in power, it is obviously in America's long-term interests to have market economics demonstrate its viability in Russia. By keeping American investors at bay and preventing would-be Soviet entrepreneurs from selling to us, withholding MFN makes the transition to a market-based economy all the more difficult.

But in any case, it's hard to deny that Jackson-Vanik is a standard that has outlived its usefulness. The problem is not merely its inconsistent application by Bush. Jackson-Vanik is simply too narrow a gauge. If human rights are to be linked to MFN, there is no justification for making free emigration the only measure of them. Emigration was never a sufficient standard; the exclusive focus on it allowed Romania to retain MFN while Ceausescu was selling Jews for hard currency and compiling a record as one of the worst rights violators in the world. Political imprisonment, torture, and other indicators need to be taken into account. And in an increasingly post-Communist era, the standard should be applied to all countries, not just Communist ones. It should measure improvement on human rights rather than performance on an absolute scale.

Recognition of Jackson-Vanik's obsolescence seems to be growing, if slowly. "In the case of the Soviet Union, it was on balance helpful," says Representative Stephen Solarz, chairman of Asian affairs subcommittee. "But now we need to reconsider the whole question of MFN in relation to our interest in democracy and human rights." Bush's cockeyed decision on China and the Soviet Union provides Congress with an occasion to do exactly that. •

How to sell a Democratic tax increase.

WITHHOLDING FIRE

By Robert S. McIntyre and Bruce Fisher

Not long ago we went to see a leading liberal Democratic senator who is up for re-election this fall. His staff wanted us to talk about how he should address the tax issue. We suggested that since he intended to offer voters more government benefits—improved education, better roads, and so forth—he needed a politically and morally appealing proposal for how to pay for them, and for reducing the budget deficit as well. If he didn't define a coherent tax program—specifically, a plan to take back the huge tax cuts given to the very rich in the 1980s—then his opponent would define his tax program for him, claiming, quite plausibly, that he wanted to raise taxes on middle- and low-income people.

The senator agreed with us on substance. Indeed, he said, "If there were a proposal to raise income taxes on the rich on the Senate floor tomorrow, you know that I would vote for it." But he dismissed the idea of campaigning on the tax question. His re-election fight was going to be "mainly about personalities," he said, as long as one candidate didn't foolishly force the campaign to hinge on some important issue. "I cannot and will not state in my campaign that I favor an income tax increase, even one that only affects the rich," he concluded. "That would be political suicide."

Unfortunately, this senator's views are all too typical. No doubt his highly paid political consultants (who helped manage the unsuccessful campaigns of numerous Democratic presidential candidates) have told him and other like-minded congressional candidates that taxes are a losing issue, no matter how the argument is framed. But are they right? Is what most of us would call populist tax rhetoric now unpopular?

We don't think so. The electorate seems finally ready to listen to candidates who are willing to talk honestly about tax fairness and willing to represent the self-interest of the vast majority of Americans on taxes. According to numerous recent public opinion polls, the public, by margins of three- and four-to-one, favors higher taxes on "the rich," defined as people with incomes in excess of $100,000. Indeed, conservative political analyst Kevin Phillips worries that middle-class anger over supply-side tax and income inequality could be the undoing of right-wing Republicanism in the 1990s, unless Democrats are too timid and strategically misplaced to take advantage of the issue.

And that's the rub. If the liberal Democrat we talked with is re-elected based only on his engaging personal-

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ity, he won't come back to Washington with any mandate for what he claims he really wants to do on taxes. Right now a healthy majority of congressional Democrats clearly favor taking back some or all of the tax cuts that have gone to the very rich over the past decade and a half. Virtually all congressional Republicans vigorously oppose such a tax hike, out of ideology, the interests of their core constituency, or loyalty to their president. They are joined by a good number of conservative Democrats. The critical remaining swing votes will go whichever way the political wind is blowing. And the only way to change that is for candidates who favor fair taxes to campaign successfully on the issue.

It's not surprising that most American taxpayers are disgruntled. Since 1977 total federal taxes have been increased for all but the very richest segment of American families. Meanwhile, taxpayers are getting fewer benefits for their tax dollars. Since 1980 federal spending on all programs other than Social Security and defense has fallen from 9.7 percent of the gross national product to 7.3 percent—a decline of 25 percent. The huge supply-side deficits (augmented by higher defense spending) and the resulting jump in interest payments have crowded out federal spending on programs that the public wants and supports.

Charging taxpayers more and giving them less is a recipe for unhappiness with government. The anti-government, pro-wealthy supply-siders mixed these ingredients well in the tax programs of 1978 (the capital gains cut) and 1981 (corporate tax cuts, a 20-point top personal rate cut, and a cornucopia of loopholes). They slashed taxes on those with the greatest ability to pay, and they let inflation and higher payroll taxes increase burdens on the vast majority of people. Even after several tax reform bills (notably the 1986 Tax Reform Act) scaled back some of the supply-side excesses, the richest one million families in this country enjoy a total 1990 tax cut of $84 billion, an average of $82,196 each. Combined with the interest on the almost $1 trillion in debt built up to pay for previous cuts, the total cost of the supply-side tax cuts for the richest 1 percent this year is close to $160 billion—essentially the entire budget deficit.

Supply-side politicians (who have dominated Republican policy-making for the past decade and a half) have skillfully exploited this public discontent with the federal government—despite the fact that they engineered it. They tell voters that the problem is waste in government, and that they will strive to improve government management and cut taxes. They say that to vote for liberals and moderates (particularly Democrats) will mean higher taxes on average families and more government waste.

Many liberal and moderate politicians fall into the trap that the supply-siders set for them. These politicians "responsibly" call for tax increases—without specifying whose taxes they want to raise. Or even worse, they specify the taxes they want to increase, and they turn out to be regressive excise taxes, or across-the-board tax hikes, or other kinds of tax changes that hit middle- and low-income people the hardest. Witness the Mondale campaign of 1984, where most voters saw, correctly, Mondale's promise to increase taxes as a promise to increase taxes on them.

Alternatively, liberals and moderates run away from the tax issue. For example, they call for a revitalization of federal spending on popular programs—education, health care, fixing roads and bridges, saving the environment—without saying how they will pay for them. Supply-side candidates then pounce, pointing out the huge tax increases (or deficit increases) these programs would entail. They charge that the tax hikes implicit in the liberal-moderate position will fall on average-income voters. Given history, the charge seems plausible, and it sticks. Witness the Dukakis campaign of 1988, in which Bush's "no new taxes" pledge had resonance precisely because of Dukakis's inability to explain how he would pay for his proposed initiatives.

Another all-too-common response is paralysis. Feeling hamstrung by the deficit problem, liberals and moderates offer few if any new initiatives. The campaign then comes down to a choice between two candidates, neither of whom offers anything serious in the way of federal programs, with one promising "no new taxes" or even tax cuts, and the other offering either tax hikes or standing pat. Again, it's easy to see which candidate the voters will choose.

There is a better way. Liberals and moderates must establish a new paradigm in the public's mind about the problem with government. First, they must show some sympathy for the real problems of average voters. That means they must acknowledge that for most people, government costs too much and provides too little.

Second, they must honestly explain why this has happened. Part of the problem is that the supply-side "managers" have encouraged waste and abuse on an unprecedented scale, as illustrated by the S&L disaster, the HUD scandal, and Pentagon waste. But the main reason Americans are paying more for government and getting less is because they are paying for tax cuts for the very rich. In fact, if the tax code were as progressive as it was in 1977, nine out of ten families would pay lower taxes, and the government would collect an additional $70 billion in net revenue. Here too supply-side politicians are to blame. In the name of "across-the-board" tax cuts and "incentives," they dramatically shifted the tax burden away from the wealthy and onto middle- and lower-income people. And they continue to call for more tax cuts for the rich, such as a cut in the capital gains tax.

Finally, liberals and moderates must offer real solutions. Our system of campaign finance may make this part of the strategy painful, but if they are to address the tax issue successfully, they must call for higher taxes on the richest 1 percent. And they must define "rich" not as, say, families making more than $50,000 (which is close to the median for families of four), but people making more than $200,000. "The rich are ripping us off" is the message, and voters must understand that "rich" does not mean the average family.

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With an accurate and politically resonant position on taxes, liberals and moderates can then can address the spending side of the budget. They can speak responsibly and realistically about revitalizing our economy with needed government spending on education, roads, bridges, and so forth. They can talk about providing health care for those who need it. They can propose new environmental initiatives. They can explain other ways in which they would spend the "peace dividend." And they can do all of these things in the context of serious deficit reduction.

The public does in fact support many of the things government spends money on. People do want government to spend more on some kinds of programs. But they think they are already paying enough in taxes. Liberal and moderate candidates who want people to vote for them because they can do a better job on spending must also persuade voters that they can do a better job on taxes.

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE is director and BRUCE FISHER is research director of Citizens for Tax Justice.

The strange career of the Shining Path.

THE WAR OF THE PHILOSOPHER-KING

By Gustavo Gorriti

LIMA, PERU

Back in the 1960s, when Cuban-inspired revolutionary enthusiasm was rampant in Latin America and the archetypes for most revolutionaries were Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, many radicals saw no higher achievement than the status of guerrilla *comandante*. Virtuosity in the tactics of guerrilla warfare seemed the key to attaining social justice, political power, and existential fulfillment all at once.

But even then Abimael Guzmán's fervent disciples didn't think of him as a *comandante*. He was called Doctor "Puka Inti"—in Quechua, the Red Sun. It was the same spirit with which the intellectual foot soldiers of the Middle Ages expressed their awe for the aces of scholasticism, with names like Doctor Angelicus (Thomas Aquinas) and Doctor Mirabilis (Roger Bacon). Other followers of Guzmán, however, called him Shampoo. Why? "Because he washes your head." Meaning your brains.

Even now, ten years after the once obscure Puka Inti and his organization (called the Communist Party of Peru by the faithful, and Sendero Luminoso, or the Shining Path, by the rest of us) went to war, he is never depicted with a uniform, or with a gun. In the few, almost hagiographic, propaganda posters the Shining Path has produced, an idealized Guzmán leads endless columns of armed followers, while clutching a book. He is much more than a warrior. As a 1982 Shining Path pamphlet on military matters put it: "To wage war it is necessary to be a philosopher. Comrade Gonzalo's battle plans are political, not technical." ("Gonzalo" is the nom de guerre Guzmán assumed shortly after splitting from the main pro-Chinese Communist Party in 1970 to lead his own faction.)

In Latin America's violent milieu, the Shining Path insurgency stands out. Wholly unrelated to other Latin rebellions, not depending on any foreign country for support, dispensing the same unconditional hostility to the Chinese, Soviet, Cuban, North Korean, and U.S. governments (to name just a few), the Shining Path wages revolutionary war according to Maoist "People's War" doctrine, keeping the orthodox course through extensive practice of "Cultural Revolution" purging rituals, and maintaining unity through a personality cult of proportions that would put Orwell's imagination to shame.

Before the Shining Path went to war, infra-red Maoism in Latin America had become mostly associated with marginalized student groups. No guerrilla organization had adopted People's War doctrine in an orthodox way. So when the Shining Path took up arms, the attempt seemed a doomed effort to graft the Chinese experience onto the entirely different Peruvian culture. To most people in Peru, including the large legal left, the movement seemed to be a crazy sect, hopelessly divorced from reality.

Several actions reinforced that impression. In December 1980 dogs were hung from downtown Lima's lampposts, with furiously scribbled signs wrapped around their bodies: "Deng Hsiao Ping, Son of a Bitch!" In 1982 Shining Path guerrillas devastated the chief experimental farm of San Cristóbal's Ayacucho University (their alma mater), which had provided sore-

GUSTAVO GORRITI's last piece for TNR was "The Fox and the Hedgehog" (February 12). The first of his three-volume history of the Shining Path is being published in Peru this month.

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ly needed seed, cattle, and agro-industry pilot projects to the very poor peasants and farmers of the region. (Development projects distract the people from the centrality of the war.) This year they blew up the Peru National Agriculture University's sperm bank, part of a program to improve cattle quality nationwide. Dynamite pulverizing sperm. Their shrill mimeographed sheets read like a bad translation of a Xinhua News Agency dispatch at the time of the Cultural Revolution. The Shining Path appeared to have made the transition from the pathetic to the preposterous and from there to utter depravity. They seemed destined to disappear as soon as they were confronted with a minimum of the Peruvian state's military strength.

Yet the Shining Path insurgency has grown to proportions approached by no other rebellion in Peru's history. At least 20,000 people have died, most of them civilians, and about 50 percent of Peru's population now lives under a continual state of emergency, imposed over a territory the size of several Central American countries. Every year as the insurgency has grown it has become a daily matter of life or death for more and more people who still haven't begun to understand it. The energy and transportation infrastructure, frequently sabotaged, have been critically impaired. Direct damage to the economy is estimated to be at least $15 billion, in a country whose yearly GDP is about $17 billion. Worse, since the country is suffering from a virtually bankrupt legal economy and an unwanted but certain dependence on cocaine's export income, the impact of the Shining Path on the state's weakened defenses keeps increasing. Meanwhile, the ragtag guerrillas of the early days, who had no military training and poor weaponry, have been replaced in several parts of the country by battle-hardened, company-size groups armed with machine guns and rifle-propelled grenades. They keep occupying new spaces, which they endow with a distinct lethality—the fertilizer, it seems, for the philosopher's war.

This growth cannot be explained through the Pol Potian stereotype—a bunch of crazies who are killing the very people they should be winning over. Experience demonstrates that crazy sects die fast (unless, as in the case of Pol Pot, they are benefited by foreign aid and invasion), usually through self-destruction. Although the Shining Path's murderous policies are all too real, there is clearly more than bloody fanaticism to them. The organization has a well-developed strategy, disciplined cadre, and, of course, Guzmán.

It was evident from the beginning that Guzmán was the insurgency's key protagonist. As Peruvian security forces tried to lay hands on him, he became invisible and ubiquitous at the same time. Rumor flourished: supposedly knowledgeable sources in the security forces claimed he was gravely ill, then said he was dead. He was subsequently resurrected by supposedly better sources. Fiercely protected by his organization, he assumed an aura of almost supernatural power.

The metamorphosis from Abimael Guzmán to Presidente Gonzalo, the philosopher-emperor, was a long one, with tenacity playing a much larger role than intellectual brilliance, and eventually assuming its guise. Born out of wedlock in December 1934, in the same Arequipa *departamento* (state) where Mario Vargas Llosa was born two years later, Guzmán remained with his mother until his early teens. Then his father, a middle-class merchant, took him into his own family's custody in the city of Arequipa. He was sent to a Catholic high school, where he was known as an introverted student who excelled academically. Intellectual merit has always been respected in Arequipa—one of the ways of social ascent in an otherwise very traditional place—and this serious student was well liked.

After entering Arequipa's San Agustin University, Guzmán came under the influence of two older men who were decisively to affect his life. They were a philosophy professor, Miguel Angel Rodríguez Rivas, and the social-realist painter Carlos De la Riva.

Rodríguez Rivas was a man of poor origins who had worked his way through high school and college. While preparing for a teaching assistantship he is said to have memorized a huge treatise on psychiatry, which became the standard textbook. The course's professor gave him an assistantship with an apparent mixture of admiration and terror. "He was very intelligent," recalls a not very friendly former colleague, "but he was crazy . . . if his thinking suffered a deviation it could take him anywhere in the world, and he would follow it, thinking that he was dutifully following sacred Reason."

Rodríguez Rivas became a Kantian. He brought to his intellectual work an uncompromising intensity, rigorous methodology, an ascetic sense of discipline. Exams in his class could be an exercise in collective psychodrama. Some students would faint when looking at the questionnaire and were taken out of the classroom in silence, while the rest tried to concentrate under Rodríguez Rivas's merciless stare. He had a group of fiercely loyal disciples who were some of the best students, and his stern approach fired their enthusiasm, prodded them to hard work. But not everything was intellectual toil. As Professor Kant did with his disciples, Rodríguez Rivas got together with his own on Saturday nights, for some hard-drinking philosophical bohemia, where the soul was allowed to roam free without methodological constraints.

Abimael Guzmán became a junior member of the group. He was shy and untiring in his research, yet intellectually passionate. In an elitist group with a distinct sense of intellectual superiority over the rest of the academic community, Guzmán was seen as a gifted intellectual. He wrote some articles for the group's magazine, *Hombre y Mundo* ("Man and World," an homage to German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey). The group, whose lofty goal was to forge, through rigorous philosophical work, the lever with which to change both man and world, soon became identified with the name of its magazine.

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At about the same time Guzmán also came under the influence of Carlos De la Riva. De la Riva was an undiluted Stalinist, a Communist whose convictions were too fierce for the Party to manage comfortably. As a painter of good technical skills and a fairly able writer as well, he could have succeeded in the conventional way in meritocratic Arequipa. He rejected it. He took social realism to heart, using his painting as a propaganda instrument and writing political pamphlets.

He thought that if Communist parties were to achieve their goals, they must be unyielding, stoic, aggressive, yet smart: dialectical methodology ferociously carried out. Stalin epitomized those qualities. And when the first signs of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign began to shock Communist parties all over the world, he focused on the one country where the revolutionary fire still seemed to burn strongly: China. Chinese Communists stood in stark contrast to the soft, incompetent members of the Peruvian Communist Party. After a long trip to China he wrote an enthusiastic book, *Where Dawn Is Born*. His thinking had a decisive effect on Guzmán. In late 1959 or early 1960, Guzmán became a member of the Peruvian Communist Party.

In January 1960 an earthquake caused great destruction in Arequipa. Rodríguez Rivas and the "Man and World" group decided it was the time for Reason to come to the aid of Reality. Nobody knew the real extent of damage, so the group decided to do a census to apply the relief efforts more effectively. It was a very thorough undertaking, which provided an accurate picture of both Arequipa's immediate needs and its poverty. For Guzmán, who participated in the project, this was a critical experience. Roughly similar methods would be used for political work in the future.

Then Rodríguez Rivas made an ill-advised attempt to be elected faculty dean. He and his group were resented as much as they were respected, and Rodríguez Rivas's aloof attitude wasn't the best way to succeed in office politics. He was soundly defeated. Bitterly disappointed, he quit his job and left Arequipa. The "Man and World" group disbanded.

Soon afterward Guzmán graduated, with a thesis—dedicated to his mentor—on Kant's theory of space. What he retained from his relationship with Rodríguez Rivas was methodology, not substance: intensity in study and research, tenacious dedication to an objective, and asceticism. The substance came from De la Riva: orthodox communism, as developed and kept in China. He would never swerve from that line.

In January 1962 Guzmán applied for a teaching appointment at the Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga and was named a philosophy professor. He had been recruited by the new university president, Efraín Morote Best. When he left Arequipa for Ayacucho a few months later, he was already bent on the revolutionary road. In *Fire On the Andes*, a book written in 1934, the year Guzmán was born, the journalist Carleton Beals had written that in unstable Peru, "Revolutions begin in Arequipa, but when they reach Ayacucho, then things become serious." That's what began to happen in 1962.

Although the University of Huamanga was technically reopened in 1958 (it had been closed in 1886), it was in reality an entirely new and (for Peru) audacious education project. The idea was to use a modern, technically oriented university as an engine of progress in an abysmally poor and backward place. Peru's economy had been growing steadily during the '50s, but Ayacucho had been left behind. The reopening of the university was meant to correct that. Its first president and guiding force, Fernando Romero Pintado, was a man of vision who believed that Ayacucho could become an education industry town that would prepare professionals, mostly in areas such as farming, agro-industry, and mining. Both the university's research and the students would energize the region.

The university was fashioned on the American model of the '50s. Thanks to good fund-raising, it could offer the best wages in Peru and attracted some of the country's top intellectuals. Several young U.S. and European professors also were hired. Political activity among the students, a decades-long tradition in Peru, was emphatically discouraged. But the contrasts were all too apparent: between young, bright, well-paid professors and the traditional families, the decaying city with thirty-three semi-abandoned churches, the mass of illiterate Indians, and the semi-starving students, who had made it to college thanks to the tremendous sacrifices of their parents or their communities.

The university had begun to change Ayacucho for the better. But at the same time the very concept of change was called into question. The tug between reform and revolution, which was the central debate in Latin America during the '60s, was going to have the same unfortunate resolution it had almost everywhere, only in a much more extreme form.

In 1961 the leftist, largely Communist-controlled groups began to increase their influence in the university. Frustrated, Romero left, and Morote took over. A complex man of quick, acerbic wit, Morote had clear authoritarian tendencies. He would be torn between his desire to maintain the academic standards of the university and helping with the "politically progressive" measures of opening it up to masses of new students and allowing proselytizing work. Thanks to Guzmán, he never had much of a choice, and ultimately would be overcome by events to a nightmarish extent.

When Guzmán arrived in Ayacucho, the local Communist Party organization was a sleepy group made up of people who listened to Moscow radio over the shortwave and would get together on weekends to drink and to praise the latest reported increase in the Soviet Union's pig iron output. They talked about the Sputnik, about Yuri Gagarin. Their dogs were unfailingly named Laika. Their sons were Sasha, Yuri, Vladimir. Guzmán was put in charge of youth work and immediately set out to change things.

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Soon Communist students were conducting the kind of census in the Ayacucho barrios that he had helped organize in Arequipa. With accurate information about most neighborhoods, the young Communist activists were able to gain quicker and better results. He also tried to organize poor neighborhoods so that they would interact with the university, especially with student organizations.

His objective was clear: to use the university to recruit, educate, organize, and subsidize the growth of Communist cadres. Guzmán had the university create a high school that was mostly staffed by teachers who were Communist Party members or sympathizers. Those students who became early recruits proved an ideal way to forge a relationship with their towns and communities. He would try to get as many of his young recruits into the university as possible. Then they would return home to lay the groundwork for revolutionary work. In the process he helped to destroy the academic excellence of the university. For him, it was a small price to pay.

In February 1964, after a discreet courtship, he married Augusta La Torre, the daughter of local Communist leader Carlos La Torre. Augusta was eighteen at the time, Guzmán twenty-nine. It would be a childless marriage (Guzmán had a daughter from a previous short-lived relationship), with Augusta remaining a devoted companion through the often unconventional situations that marriage to a philosopher-king entails.

About the same time, the December 1963 Sino-Soviet rift had a traumatic echo in Peru, as it eventually would have in other Latin America countries. At the beginning of 1964 the Peruvian Communist Party divided. The majority of the party's middle- and high-level leadership went to the pro-Chinese camp. In Ayacucho, when old-time Ayacucho Party leader Isaias Poma Rondinel proposed nominating Marx, Engels, and Lenin for the "symbolic presidium," Guzmán demanded the incorporation of Stalin on it. Khrushchev-era pro-Soviets just couldn't accept that. The final split occurred, with Guzmán emerging as leader of the Pekingese faction.

Guzmán had already achieved distinction in his dual role as university professor and the pro-Chinese faction's most important leader in Ayacucho. His nom de guerre was Alvaro, a conquistador's name. Still thin, with long hair, he had the appearance of an earnest young intellectual. He almost always wore a jacket without a tie. He often carried one or two books under his arm. University president Morote had tried to make fun of armpit reading. "Those great truths, my friend" that could be learned through the armpit "are still to be discovered." Nevertheless, Guzmán's influence had reached even Morote's household. Morote's older sons Osmán and Katya were already active followers of Guzmán. He was often surrounded by young students, most from very poor backgrounds, usually of Indian extraction, who eagerly made the jump from illiteracy to philosophy. He was opening up for them the secrets of the universe and their role in giving a sense to it. Some of his colleagues were more skeptical. A noted Peruvian writer remembers him as "dry, disagreeable. . . . He was always surrounded by his acolytes—a bunch of *cholitos adefesieros*—to whom he would talk about Camus, Schopenhauer. *Reader's Digest* philosophy." *Cholitos adefesieros* is an almost untranslatable Creole expression of contempt for people of Indian descent. ("*Cholo*" describes people of Indian features. "*Adefesio*" is something both ridiculous and worthless.) In the future, the whole country would see how much you could do with a determined and well-organized group of *cholitos adefesieros*.

In 1965 a Cuban-inspired guerrilla insurgency against the democratically elected government of President Fernando Belaunde broke out in several places at once, including Ayacucho. Great pressure was put on the pro-Chinese Communist group to make good its revolutionary rhetoric and help the Castro-inspired group. That was not to be. The warm radical brotherhood that had united China and Cuba until 1963 was dissipating fast in 1964. Soon thereafter, Castro would attack the Chinese leadership bitterly and begin a de facto alignment with the Soviet Union. The pro-Chinese groups were instructed not to cooperate with the pro-Cuban groups.

In Ayacucho Guzmán, who had begun to organize a military wing to the Communist Party, was hard put to maintain ranks with the Party's youth; most wanted to join in the revolutionary enterprise, which promised immediate action instead of lengthy political work. But then, as Guzmán's arrest appeared imminent (Peruvian security forces weren't making subtle distinctions between pro-Cuban revolutionaries and pro-Chinese Communists), he was ordered by the Party to go underground. He was sent to China, to cadre school. It was a decisive experience. The Cultural Revolution was just beginning, and countrywide revolutionary zeal was inflamed again. As he said in a 1988 interview with the Shining Path's mouthpiece, *El Diario*, though he could look at Mao only from a distance, as thousands of starry-eyed Chinese students were doing at the time, that was enough for him. In cadre school he received thorough instruction in People's War doctrine. His predisposition to clandestinity was reinforced in a course on "open and underground work," given by a veteran in underground work against the Kuomintang. He also remembered keenly his last class on explosives and demolition. "We caught our pens, and they blew up. We then sat astounded, and our seats also blew up. It was fireworks all around us. It was carefully measured, just to let us know that you can blow up anything if you have enough ingenuity." He wouldn't forget that.

When he returned to Peru, the pro-Chinese Party's clandestine apparatus was in tatters. Several members had left to join the pro-Cuban insurgency, which had been unmercifully crushed by the Peruvian armed forces. Survivors and latecomers were confused, doing some small-time bombing in Lima. Guzmán gathered the Ayacucho Communist youth apparatus and, as Party

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egend has it, told them, "From now on, we'll stop ›ullshitting. From now on, we'll begin serious revolu-ionary work."

He didn't return permanently to Ayacucho until .968, when another professor was sacked to make room 'or him. But he had the regional organization very nuch under control, as he was fighting both inside the 'arty and against competing revolutionary groups, es-›ecially those with pro-Cuban tendencies.

The latter was a par-icularly tough fight. The elitist, romantic Cuban revolutionary deal still fired the magination of young adicals throughout atin America. The Cu-›an model was centered ›n the actions of small, ighly mobile guerrilla roups, the *foco*, which vould erode, by dint of actical virtuosity, the ighting capabilities of he armed forces and ›ring about the enthusi-stic collaboration of he peasantry, which vould then march from he Andes to the cities, s Fidel had from Sierra Maestra. The political lirection of the insur-gency had to rest on the guerrillas' military lead-ership. And to be the eader you needed some lamboyance, a good actical mind, and bet-er aerobic condition-ng. Cuba's blessing was t must, and a bit of Ca-ibbean accent in your peech was certainly a elp.

Nonsense, said Guz-nán and the pro-Chinese cadre. The Cuban approach was a petit bour-geois "militaristic" deviation, doomed to sure defeat, against which President Mao had written long ago, when referring to the "wandering guerrillas" of Chinese his-ory. In the People's War model, political work was cen-ral, and military actions only a complement. Likewise, he Party had to control completely the armed groups. And the People's War insurrectionary process was a gradual creation of ever expanding "base areas," where he Party acted as the new de facto government, strengthening itself while the government weakened, until the point of collapse.

The discussions were bitter, vicious, but by 1967 Guzmán had largely prevailed in Ayacucho. When Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia in 1967, he referred to him disdainfully as an exhibitionist. In the meantime, his own prestige as somebody equally well versed in the abstruse problems of dialectical materialism and the practical questions of party organizing had grown enormously. When lecturing, his delivery was now self-assured, emphatic. After the lectures were over, he would be followed by an enthusiastic cohort. He was Comrade Puka Inti.

'PRESIDENTE GONZALO' (1988 POSTER)

His political enemies, on the other hand, would be heckled, abused. Their job stability would be imperiled. Outside the university, in the barrios, non-accommodating people would be beaten up at night. Politics there indeed was a holistic affair.

The tremors of China's Cultural Revolution reverberated in Peru. The country now had the strongest pro-Chinese Communist groups in South America. However, they were badly split, and in 1967 a sizable group left the Party and formed its own. Guzmán remained under Party leader Saturnino Paredes, but most people thought it was only a matter of time before Guzmán's supremacy became clear.

In late 1968 Peru's armed forces, thinking the country was in a state of "latent insurgency," overthrew President Belaunde—and then, to everybody's surprise, embarked on a left-wing reformist course. They carried out major social reforms, especially a very bold agrarian reform. They veered toward socialism while contending that they were inventing a new revolutionary way. They opened up the jails, freed the few surviving former guerrillas, and made government bureaucrats out of them. Fidel gave his wholehearted blessing. The pro-Soviet Communist Party applauded too, especially after the American military mission was expelled and huge quantities of Soviet weaponry were bought.

Guzmán and the pro-Chinese Communists sensed the reformist danger and opposed the military govern-

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ment tooth and nail. They condemned it as a "fascist" regime, and, though reserving their most bitter invective for those leftists who were cooperating with the government, tried to create bloody confrontations with it. They didn't have to wait long.

In 1969 the military government restricted free high school education to students with passing grades. Student protests in Ayacucho were quickly taken over by the pro-Chinese Communists, and then became very violent. In June Guzmán was arrested and sent to Lima. The next day there were riots and hostage-taking in Huamanga and Huanta, followed by about a dozen deaths, then a general strike. The military government backtracked and abrogated the education law. But Guzmán and others were accused of being saboteurs of the Agrarian Reform Law, and the pro-Soviet Communist newspaper accused them of being CIA agents. Guzmán was freed after one month but was put on trial. He would be detained again by the left-wing military for short periods in 1970 and 1972.

Shortly thereafter, he broke with Party leader Saturnino Paredes, and after the by then usual barrage of mutual expulsions and Leninist invective ("Mr. Liquidationist," Guzmán called Paredes; "Mr. Opportunist," retorted Paredes) each set up his own shop claiming to be the only Communist Party of Peru. Outsiders trying to differentiate one from the other used to identify them through their newspapers. *Red Banner* was Paredes; *Shining Path* was Guzmán.

Guzmán now had his own party, but the left-wing military regime was stealing the fire from the revolutionary organizations. It had captured the country's imagination and was carrying out the reforms they had demanded all along. And it opened instantly warm relations with China, which began to grow less enthusiastic about the prospect of violent revolution in Peru.

The Shining Path continued an unconditional opposition to the military government, but for almost three years had to retreat. Guzmán used that time to reorganize the Party from scratch. After the death of the Party founder, José Carlos Mariátegui, in 1930, Guzmán contended, the Party had deviated from its revolutionary course. They should go back to Mariátegui and rebuild the Party. In doing so they incorporated Mao's Cultural Revolution rituals with People's War doctrine. In order to justify armed insurgency, they defined Peru's society as "semi-feudal" and "semi-colonial." Even other radical Marxist groups found that diagnosis ridiculous.

At that time the Shining Path virtually controlled the university in Ayacucho. Guzmán used power in a cold, dispassionate way. His former comrade Aracelio Castillo, for instance, who had remained with Paredes, was given a failing evaluation review at Guzmán's insistence. "You either use power or they will use it against you," Guzmán often said, and: "I don't have friends. I only have comrades."

They were not unopposed. All other leftist groups were trying to join an anti-Shining Path coalition. Polemics were vicious, and often violent. Printed diatribes were dirty to the point of extravagance. Guzmán's lieutenants were in charge of that. They were a talented group. There was Luis Kawata Makabe, a bright nisei whom everybody thought would be Guzmán's successor. He was friendly, charismatic, rebellious. He had a standard Marxist lecture at the university, which in forty minutes knitted events from the Big Bang to class warfare in Ayacucho. That speech accounted for dozens of ecstatic conversions. Eventually he became the Shining Path's Trotsky (though he was purged by Guzmán himself). There were also most of the sons of Efraín Morote, no longer the university's president and the Durands, and some of the Casanovas and the Cárdenas. The Party was supposed to be their life, so they socialized among themselves, they married among themselves. Morotes married Durands, Casanovas married Morotes, Durands married Cárdenas. Peru's revolution, it seemed, was going to be a family affair.

They were called "the Sacred Family" (remember Marx and Engels' book?), and the title was applied by extension to the rest of the Shining Path's leadership. A disciplined group. But some were hard drinkers, and others engaged in convoluted relationships, which eventually found expression in internal party politics. Their closed parties were gossiped about long before and after. For a time, they were dismissively nicknamed "the Chupamaros" (after Uruguay's Tupamaro guerrillas, and the verb "*chupar*," which is Peruvian slang for drinking alcohol).

Guzmán's standing already was almost uncontested. He had a new pseudonym: Gonzalo again a conquistador's name. He drove himself hard, and he began to suffer from two maladies that would plague him in the coming years psoriasis and erythremia. The latter would make progressively difficult his stay in Ayacucho or any other high-altitude place for extended periods.

Through the same intensity of work that had carried him through the previous decade, Guzmán built his own highly disciplined political party, which survived the leftist military government's high tide. When the overspending on economically unviable reforms caused the first part of an economic crisis that continues to this day, the Shining Path went on the political offensive. From late 1972 to 1975 it expanded and consolidated its growth. It wasn't an easy road, however. In Ayacucho, all opposing leftist forces finally got together and captured the university and student bodies, and began to beat the Shining Path in university elections for student federations. University authorities who formerly were afraid of Guzmán now began to hound him. He resigned from his university post in 1976.

Then several things happened at once. First, he decided that the Party was already reorganized. The Shin-

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ing Path was one of the few organizations that had been able to incorporate the Cultural Revolution's rituals without disintegrating into anarchy. Second, he decided to move a substantial number of cadre to the countryside, to intensify and expand political work in preparation for the armed insurgency. That was a full four years before the insurgency began. It was a proof of commitment insofar as for many it meant leaving jobs and families behind. Third, Mao's death and then Deng's coup threw them into confusion, and then into furious hostility against Deng. For twelve years now, they had had a very close relationship with the Chinese, sending cadre for training and receiving some monetary help.

It was hard for them to realize that they were alone. For orthodox Communists, that was an unheard of situation. For a time, they tried to keep bridges open with Mao's former ally, Albania's Enver Hoxha. But Hoxha's increasing attacks against Mao and his preference for Paredes's Red Banner organization made for a furious break.

After the craving for a new revolutionary master abated, Guzmán and his party took an unexpected course: they would become the center of world revolution. Maoist ideology had predicted the possibility of losing entire revolutionary countries to revisionist thermidorians. But by stressing the primacy of ideology, it showed that as long as an organized Party maintained the correct line, communism would recover, and conquer in the end. Maoism had also tried to prevent "capitalistic restoration," but in Guzmán's view it had failed because it didn't go far enough.

They had to improve Mao's thought, to prevent capitalistic restoration. And as restoration had come through Communist leaders, it was clear that both Stalin's and Mao's purging methods hadn't worked as expected. "Cultural revolutions" should be semi-permanent affairs. (Many former close comrades of Guzmán's would be ruthlessly purged in the coming years at the first signs of independent thought or action.) Also, as Communist parties had proved to be coup-prone, they should organize themselves along military lines. And finally, the People's War insurgency's first stages should be as carefully planned as the final part of a "strategic offensive."

These improvements on Mao would be called the "Guiding Thought of Comrade Gonzalo." It sounded as alien and as ridiculous to Peruvians as it probably sounds now to Americans. As noted earlier, Guzmán wasn't particularly brilliant, but he excelled at planning and organization, and he had an outstanding strategist's mind. In 1978-79, while the military government was preparing to transfer power back to civilian rule and most Marxist groups were making the transition to elected legitimacy, the Shining Path alone prepared itself for war. If social and economic reforms were successfully opposed in the early '70s, so would be democracy in the '80s.

The debate over whether to go to war was not an easy one. Some veteran leaders confronted Guzmán and maintained that they were heading for collective suicide. But he humiliated and finally obliterated all opposition. A few were expelled in disgrace. The Party followed him.

In January 1979 he was unexpectedly arrested in Lima. But the organization hired a respected "progressive" lawyer and even managed to produce four generals (at least one was tricked) into advocating his immediate release. As soon as he was freed, he disappeared underground, where he remains today.

In March and April 1980, the Shining Path had its last peacetime meetings. For those who faltered when considering the enormity of their task, Guzmán had a historical example. He read excerpts of Washington Irving's all but forgotten 1850 book, *The Life of Mahomet*, to show how a bunch of desert tribes, when moved by an intense conviction, could conquer a great part of the world in one generation. (He used the example again ten years later, in the Shining Path's first Party congress, when stressing the power of ideology. "If that reactionary Muslim religious ideology can move, unite the Arab people . . . how could the ideology of History's last social class fail to transform the world and to build communism?") He was persuasive, and the war soon began.

The insurgency grew steadily without any outside assistance. The quantity and quality of operations systematically improved, from violent political demonstrations to military attacks. In a number of districts, especially rural ones, the Shining Path ruthlessly eliminated the state's presence, becoming the effective underground government. It was a strategy geared to gradually wrest control of territory and population from the Peruvian state.

The Shining Path successfully attacked blind spots in Peru's defenses. It was probably one of the most announced insurrections in Latin America, but the intelligence services of the military government didn't react at first. They were waiting for a conventional Latin American insurgency, with guerrillas in olive green fatigues, or for an urban guerrilla outbreak. Then, when the armed forces tried, especially in 1984, to eradicate the insurgency by killing as many guerrillas, suspects, or sympathizers as possible, they found that the Shining Path, despite fearful losses, was able to withstand the offensive in the most critical areas, while actually growing in others. Tenacious and shrewd, they used reserves and reinforcements from other parts of the country as well as parallel clandestine networks in contested areas.

In 1981 Guzmán's organization explicitly assumed what he called "*La Cuota*" (the price). They had to prepare for the bloodbath that was sure to come. No Communist insurgency had succeeded without a fearful price in casualties, so they must be prepared to cross "the river of blood," "to carry their lives on their fingertips," ready to lose them at a moment's notice for the revolution. Guzmán's status, meanwhile, had be-

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come even more exalted. He was called the "Fourth Sword" of world revolution. In the pledge that all new Shining Path members had to make, they promised Gonzalo, "Chief of the Communist Party of Peru and of World Revolution," to give their lives "for the triumph" of world revolution. At the same time, communities that resisted the Shining Path's rule were punished, sometimes with great ferocity.

In April 1983 Shining Path guerrillas (led by a former social realist short-story writer) stormed the Andean village of Lucanamarca, which had rejected them, and after rounding up villagers in the church, massacred close to seventy people, including children. Years later, in the 1988 *El Diario* interview, Guzmán acknowledged having ordered the massacre. "Neither they nor we forget that action. . . . We say there was an excess there . . . but everything in life has two aspects. . . . The most important thing is that we gave them a strong blow, which stunned them. We made them understand that they were confronting a different kind of people's fighters."

Guzmán's primary strategic objective was to create an axis of Shining Path-controlled or -influenced areas, alongside the Andes mountains, from north to south. This was more or less achieved by late 1986. At the same time the Shining Path was active in Lima and in coastal areas. In 1987 they made a drive into the Upper Huallaga Valley, the world's most important coca-producing area, purporting to defend the *cocalero* peasants from the violence of narcotics traffickers, as well as from police and U.S.-funded eradication workers. As the "drug war" intensified and American presence in the valley increased, the Shining Path happily prepared to confront them, reasoning that if they can turn an insurgency into, in their words, "a war of national resistance," then "90 percent of the population would follow us."

Meanwhile, for the last eight years, the Shining Path has networked with a group of surviving Maoist parties from all over the world. The organization, the International Revolutionary Movement, is headquartered in England. Although trying to upgrade to a new Maoist international, it does not yet seem quite prepared to acknowledge Guzmán's undisputed leadership.

What is the foreseeable future of this insurgency? At least for a time, it will continue to grow. Its strength clearly is due as much to its own skills as to the weaknesses of the Peruvian state and the shortcomings of Peru's elites, whose learning curve has been flat. Today, after a decade of war, the Shining Path has shown that it is possible to defy history's current. In Peru, at least, Communists aren't yet a dying breed.

The country's next democratic government will have no choice but to try to defeat the Shining Path. The insurgency is not open to dialogue or negotiation. It wants victory on the battlefield, and it must be defeated before any kind of stability is achieved. Unfortunately, there are no visible leaders in Peru with something even approaching Guzmán's strategic vision and decisiveness. Mario Vargas Llosa, who still has a good shot at winning the presidency, largely overlooked the issue until he saw how seriously foreign investors viewed it. Now he has said that he will personally lead the war against the Shining Path and that he will be careful to respect human rights. He has a lot to learn, both about democratic counterinsurgency strategy and about the maddening elusiveness, resilience, and brutality of his enemy.

Very few people think that the Shining Path will be able to overthrow Peru's government in two or three years. The rebels, however, profess now to see "the triumph in perspective." And many think that the rebels might indirectly achieve the overthrow of the elected regime by making people perceive democracy as ineffectual in dealing with an extreme threat. In this case, a military dictatorship could be what the future holds.

If the country begins to disintegrate, the Shining Path insurgency might well achieve regional importance. There won't be a way to put a *cordon sanitaire* around Peru, and the People's War may spill over to other countries—such as, say, Bolivia—that have similar social and cultural structures. (Bolivia had a strong pro-Chinese Communist faction in the '60s with close ties to the Peruvian faction.) Puka Inti just might be able to plunge South America into the warring era that his ideological enemy Che Guevara only dreamed about.

Does it matter to the United States? As far as American diplomacy is concerned, Peru is where the coca-producing Upper Huallaga is, and not much more. The $35 million called for in an as yet unsigned agreement between the two countries is intended mainly to equip and train a number of army and marine battalions so that they would be able to eradicate, or at least push back, the Shining Path in the coca-producing areas. As an American diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Lima told me, "We are providing assistance to the army so they can make the area safe for us." This approach, if anything, imperils Peru's security and stability. If the United States succeeds in enlisting the Peruvian military in mostly repressive anti-drug actions in the Huallaga area, the insurgency will surely grow faster.

So in Peru, as in other South American countries, Marxism—both of the kind that evolves toward a Felipe González kind of socialism in Spain and the one that evolves toward an Ayatollah Khomeini kind of fanaticism—will still have a large role to play. As for Puka Inti, he will continue to produce many more deaths and destruction in the name of a better world. To his followers he is nothing less than the philosopher-emperor who will lead orthodox Marxist-Leninist-Maoists all over the world in a victorious reconquest of territory lost to revisionist *nomenklaturas*. He will, most likely, fall very short of that exalted objective. But in the meantime, he is democracy's most formidable enemy in South America, and probably in the hemisphere. •

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Hanging out with Sendero soldiers.

GUERRILLA TOURISM

By Tina Rosenberg

LIMA, PERU

The Shining Path threw a square dance any mother could love. The hall was freshly painted, decorated with balloons filled with confetti and colored-paper snowflakes. As Javier and I walked in, young people were eating plates of chicken and rice or square dancing in Andean folk style as men in ponchos played guitars and flutes. We had picked our way through the rubble in the unlit streets outside, filled with broken glass and fermenting garbage; few places are as menacing as a Lima barrio at night. But inside was all light and laughter, good clean fun—except that the band's lyrics were a hymn to the People's War, and among the young dancers were people who attached bombs to dogs and slit policemen's throats.

Javier had been a guerrilla for nearly ten years, four of them spent in jail, and he is only twenty-three. He told me to introduce myself only as his friend from the States. "Are they all from the Shining Path?" I asked, somewhat alarmed; there were 200 people here. "I can't answer that," he said, smiling enigmatically. "They all have the desire to serve the people." We broke into the line to dance to a song that began, "Warrior with a Red heart, nothing can stop him." The music was a melancholy wail, like Yiddish klezmer music, and as the line dance picked up I began to feel at home; we were doing the hora.

The United States is proposing a $35 million program to train the Peruvian military to fight drugs in the coca-growing Upper Huallaga Valley and the people who control it, the Shining Path. U.S. advisers will be directing the fight. Before opening this new chapter in U.S. counterinsurgency history, it would be useful to try to understand the Shining Path, Sendero Luminoso. Their fanaticism and worship of violence make this a daunting task, but that very difficulty is cautionary in itself.

I had met Javier when he was in jail in 1988. This March I arrived in Lima after two years' absence and looked him up, thinking he would be dead or back in the mountains. He was, instead, living with his widowed mother, a retired postal worker. He greeted me like an old friend and agreed to spend his evenings for a week as my tour guide to the Shining Path in Lima, to help me understand what the People's War was about. He would not inform his commanders, and in return, I would not publish his real name.

He had gone back into the highlands to fight but got sick and returned to Lima. Now he worked in a stockbroker's office—a situation in which he found no irony—studied law at night, and dedicated his free time to the People's War. It was going well. The People's War, which celebrated its tenth birthday on May 17, has taken the lives of 20,000 Peruvians. Since 1987 Peruvian security forces have "disappeared" more people than any other in the world. From 1982 to 1988 more than 6,000 people were killed or disappeared in the state of Ayacucho alone, the vast majority of them unarmed civilians. That's twice the number that Augusto Pinochet's Chilean government killed or disappeared in sixteen years.

In spite of government repression—or, more likely, because of it—Sendero Luminoso is growing. Two weeks after I saw Javier, Sendero launched its largest offensive in ten years of war, in one day reportedly killing seventy-four peasants, many of them children, in two Andean villages. When Sendero comes to a village and calls a meeting, the wise peasant will attend. But no guerrilla movement can live on terror alone. Sendero thrives because enough peasants lend political support—at the very least, complicit silence—and thousands of young people choose to walk down the Shining Path.

About half the time I liked Javier. He plotted strategy to win his ex-girlfriend back, asked me for Reeboks from Chile, and nagged me to take care of my cold. At his house, which the family had built and still lacked some doors and part of the plumbing and roof, his mother took me aside. "If you only knew how much trouble he gives me," she said. "He only lives for politics, and now my daughter is in it too. Can't you take him to the United States, señorita?"

"What kind of kid goes around killing people," she said, standing up and waving her arms. "Down with the terrorists!" she shouted. "Death to the terrorists!" Javier had heard this before. He sat calmly eating grapes, spitting out the seeds. "I don't expect her to understand my politics," he said later. "She's ignorant, and I'll never change her. But she's my mother."

TINA ROSENBERG is a resident associate at the Carnegie Endowment. Her book on violence in Latin America is forthcoming from William Morrow.

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He was studying law to make her happy. "I don't know what else I could do to please her," he sighed as we walked out.

But at times a switch would flip in Javier's head, and he would mechanically recite twenty-minute speeches of Pensamiento Gonzalo—Gonzalo thought—Gonzalo being the nom de guerre of Sendero leader Abimael Guzmán. "Presidente Mao said it's not enough to say it once, you have to say it many times, and I'm not tired of saying it to you: we are developing a People's War, growing and victorious for the country." He never seemed to tire of saying it to me. We were walking around the campus of San Marcos University. Although apology for terrorism is technically a crime in Peru and police have staged heavy-handed raids of the university from time to time, day-to-day Sendero activity seems to go on unmolested. The campus looked like post-nuclear hell: gray, treeless, covered with garbage. At night bonfires of burning trash provided the campus's main light. I went to a law school class with Javier. Over the professor's head was written, "Long Live Presidente Gonzalo, Chief of the Party and the Revolution!" "Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought!" in red block letters. The buildings were completely covered with Sendero graffiti. On the third floor of the arts building a blank space caught my eye. "Thanks for pointing it out to me," Javier laughed. "The *compañeros* will take care of it tonight."

Sendero murals decorated the staircase landings and building lobbies: paintings of Presidente Gonzalo, in an open suit, with glasses and a paunch, holding a sword or a red hammer-and-sickle flag. Under the murals were long tracts, written in longhand in red marker on computer paper. Javier read them to me in hushed tones. "Crush the New Counter-Revolutionary Revisionist Movement: Gorbachev Betraying the People's Revolution," was the title of one. There was a tract by Mao written in smaller letters. "Read it to me," Javier said. He needed new glasses. "A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay," I read. "A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another." He nodded, savoring each word.

Sendero's terror tactics against campus leaders and suspected informers are alienating some San Marcos students. Though the Sendero slate of candidates won the student elections in 1988, it has lost support since. But the school is still a fertile recruiting ground. Peru's rates of school attendance are the fourth-highest in Latin America, and college is free. This produces some social mobility—Javier's older brother is a neurosurgeon—but the combination of articulate, educated young people and a corrupt, decayed society is an explosive mix. Sendero began in the university in the highland town of Ayacucho, where Guzmán taught, and its gospel is spread principally by teachers. New recruits, said Javier, begin with study groups in which Peru's problems and Gonzalo's solutions are analyzed. Then a *compañero* might become a courier or carry out other tasks in the network of civilian supporters. When he is ready to take up arms, he is required to kill a policeman, the act of violence binding him to Sendero.

Javier's father, who died in an auto accident, had been a policeman. But Javier was sure he would approve. He would not tell me if he himself had killed anyone, and he would say little about his early experiences. He had come in at fourteen, recruited out of junior high school. But his mother and brothers said he had always been a sentimental child, greatly affected by Peru's poverty. He had been a Boy Scout and a practicing Catholic. "But I realized that you can't change things by yourself," he said. "It has to be collective action. It was hard for me to stop believing in God. It still is. But this is the way. We are condemned to victory. They can kill 80 percent of us and the 20 will still be there. Men can be wrong, but not the party. The party is never wrong."

He served several jail terms for blowing up banks and other acts of sabotage. In July 1986 he was in Lima's El Frontón prison when the Senderistas in three Lima prisons staged an uprising. President Alan García called in the military, and 244 prisoners were killed, many while lying on the ground after they surrendered. Javier was one of a few dozen survivors in El Frontón. He lost practically everyone he knew, and was stripped and tortured later. That day is commemorated ungrammatically in Sendero thought as the "Day of Heroicism."

"Who came out ahead in that?" he asked me. It was midnight, and we were sitting in a grubby roast chicken restaurant in the center of Lima. Javier was celebrating a perfect score on a property law exam. "In the short-term or long-term?" I said. "You lost 250 of your best militants." Wrong answer. He frowned and gave me the right one: the genocide unmasked the fascist dictatorship and showed the world the heroism of the *compañeros.* The *compañeros* still live and fight in us, they are present in every moment, they showed us how to give our lives yesterday, today, and tomorrow for the revolution. But later he said quietly, "Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night like I'm still living it."

Canto Grande Prison is a sand-colored adobe fortress on the edge of a bleak slum in Lima's foothills. Saturday is visiting day for women and children. Reporters are forbidden; I had the name of a Senderista prisoner and told the guards I was her friend. There were seven checkpoints; guards stamped my arm and searched me and the cigarettes, oranges, and newspapers I carried. The center courtyard was the hub of various pavilions, separating women and men and political and common criminals. The last outpost of government authority was the guard at the door of Pavilion 1A, the Senderista women's pavilion. She opened the steel gate, which swung shut behind me. The government does not enter here; the guards are afraid, and it is easier to let the prisoners run

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their own pavilions as long as they do not try to leave. This Shining Trench of Combat, as the Senderistas call it, is a model for life after the victory of the People's War, a tiny liberated zone inside Peru's maximum-security prison.

Canto Grande provides inmates with almost nothing: a few pieces of bread a day, water when there is water (about once a week), and cement beds. If inmates want to eat, sleep on a mattress, wear clothes, or ease their days by smoking cocaine-paste cigarettes (90 percent do), the goods or money have to come from relatives or from creative capitalism, such as prostitution or selling cocaine.

But in Pavilion 1A you could eat off the floor. The main room, which held a long cement table covered with cloth, was hung with red ribbons and metallic streamers, like Christmas tree ornaments, that said RPND. "People's Republic of the New Democracy," explained my hostess, who wore a salmon-colored dress, pink shoes, and purple eye shadow. As I sat talking to Nuria (I have changed her name), each woman who walked by smiled and shook my hand heartily. I was brought a delicious breakfast of fried plantains, onions, and coffee.

Nuria said that each morning the eighty-two women in the pavilion get up at 6:30, bathe with water collected in bottles once a week, do group exercises, sing Sendero songs, listen to a compendium of the radio news, and set about assigned collective tasks of cooking, cleaning, making handicrafts to sell, or preparing theatrical programs for visiting days.

Outside on the patio, posters of Mao and murals depicting Presidente Gonzalo covered the walls. The women had gathered in a circle to greet guests with a song, accompanied by drums and guitar: "Workers and peasants together with all our people, directed by Gonzalo, we will construct our state. Let's go, Peruvian people, let's go to war; with dynamite and lead we will topple the old state. I want to be outside in the burning fields, tears, sweat, and blood—that's how we sing, that's how we dance." Nuria whispered, "That's the romantic part, to melt hearts."

Nuria was a journalist of twenty-six awaiting trial as an apologist for Sendero. I asked her why the group was so violent. "Peaceful change doesn't work," she said. "The bourgeoisie will never give up power, so anything they do without being forced to is not really giving up power. It's just a concession to keep power. Revisionism [Sendero's term for the legal left] serves only the old order. Only violence can make them give up power."

In her mind, the phrases "use violence" and "be on the side of the people" were interchangeable. I asked her about Tiananmen Square. It was a tremendously uplifting event, she said. The massacre? She waved me away. "That was not important," she said. "What was important was there were students present with Mao banners. It showed there are still people who want to use the violent way," she said. ("The People were present," Javier had told me.) What about when Sendero kills innocent bystanders? I asked. Or ordinary *campesinos* whose crime is owning a bicycle? "Every war has a cost," Nuria shrugged. "Is 60,000 children dying of hunger each year not a cost?"

The cassette playing in Nuria's head was a copy of the one I heard from Javier, and the one I heard from the other women in the jail: Cuba had not yet had a revolution, it was still in the hands of the bourgeoisie and large landowners. Pol Pot had the right idea but lacked the guidance of a Communist Party. Albania was ruled by a bourgeois revisionist.

After lunch it was time for a show. I went out to the patio and sat down with the other visitors. There was a drumroll, and the Sendero women marched out solemnly in perfect formation, carrying red flags or mock machine guns carved out of wood, all wearing black high heels, black skirts, red blouses, and Mao caps—flight attendants of the revolution. For the next three hours we watched a ceremony that celebrated International Women's Day, with speeches and tuneless Sendero songs, and a play about exploited workers who kill their oppressors with the guidance of the Shining Path. A little boy read a poem called "Woman, Mother, Guerrilla."

"It's a monastery," Father Hubert Lanssiers had said. He had been the Senderistas' chaplain, a challenging occupation—their god is Gonzalo—especially for a Belgian priest who was an honorary member of the French Foreign Legion and had been confessor to the Diems. "They are nuns; their life is work and prayer. But at the same time they can be charming and flirtatious. They ask you to bring them hair dye, but they can stick a knife into you, and twist it."

I left Pavilion 1A as mystified about the Senderista mind as when I came in; they seemed less like the Viet Cong than like Hezbollah. The prison itself was more illuminating. As I walked out of the peace and order of the Sendero Pavilion into the prison courtyard, I could imagine a sign on the pavilion door: Abandon Hope, All Ye Who Exit Here. I could hear the Sendero men singing in their pavilion, but the common prisoners had thrust their arms and in some cases their heads through the bars of their pavilions, begging for money or food and cursing ungenerous visitors. Bowls lowered on strings from the third floor hit my head, accompanied by a rain of spittle. The courtyard stank of garbage, urine, and the sweet odor of cocaine cigarettes.

It was medieval bedlam, but it was only a slightly caricatured version of some of Lima's neighborhoods. When I asked Peruvians about how things were in their country, the answer was usually the same: "Terrible—a million percent inflation, garbage piling up, no jobs, no water, no electricity." At the square dance Javier had introduced me to one of the *compañeros*, an engineering student. How are things? I said. "Great," he replied with enthusiasm. "A million percent inflation, garbage piling up, no jobs, no water, no electricity. The forces of history are really on our side." •

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On Civic Liberalism: A Symposium

Mickey Kaus's "For a New Equality" (TNR, May 7) has occasioned much discussion. A selection of letters from readers will appear in a future issue. Meanwhile, we present three commentaries, with Kaus's reply.

Mickey Kaus demonstrates that income inequality is growing in this country for reasons having nothing to do with changes in government policy. It seems odd to offer this as a reason to be less, rather than more, concerned about the government's role in aggravating this trend. No, we can't achieve egalitarian nirvana through the tax code (and don't aspire to). Maybe we can't even reverse the regressive trend in the economy. But we can reverse the regressive trend in the tax system itself.

It was "Money Conservatives," not "Money Liberals," who made taxes a front-burner issue. Is it really decadent to worry about the distributional effects of changes in the tax system? (Ditto the social welfare system?) Progressivity is not the only consideration—"like a car that can only make left turns." But surely it is *a* consideration. You do want a car that *can* turn left.

Progressive taxation is OK with Kaus on the theory of "equal sacrifice"—asking richer people to pay more since, dollar for dollar, it hurts them less—if not on the theory of redistribution. If that's his theory, fine. It may make him more of a progressivist than me, since clearly we are nowhere near the point of equal sacrifice. Taxes "bite" the working poor more than they bite Mickey and me; they bite Mickey and me more than they bite Donald Trump. Do we raise Trump's taxes until he finds them as burdensome as Joe Lunchpail? My own limit on redistribution is more modest (though not scientifically precise): raise Trump's taxes until the disincentive effect on him becomes too costly for the economy. We're not there yet, either.

Most of Kaus's "Civic Liberal" wish list—better public schools and parks, guaranteed jobs for welfare mothers, etc.—is unobjectionable. Since he acknowledges that progressive taxation is the proper way to pay for these excellent things, the dispute between what he calls Money Liberalism and his Civic Liberalism is smaller than he makes out. But of course there is the question of emphasis, of limited political energies and limited political chips. For that reason, let me briefly make a case against Civic Liberalism.

I am a materialist. Money is important to me and, from my observation, it is important to most other people. Attempts to make it less important—to "cabin off" its role in society—come up against the powerful moral logic of capitalism. That logic, in a nutshell, is that any voluntary exchange of goods or services leaves both parties to the exchange better off—at least by their own lights. In these exchanges, money functions as the universal solvent: anything that can be turned into money can be turned into anything else that can be turned into money. My labor becomes Safeway's groceries, etc. Reducing the sphere of money sounds great but is not morally cost-free. It also reduces the sphere of voluntary exchange.

Let's take an example from Kaus's own wish list: mandatory national service. Suppose a poor kid has finished his two years picking up litter in a national park at a trivial wage and he meets a rich kid who is about to start and doesn't relish it. Should the poor kid be allowed to take the rich kid's place—for a large sum of money? That would make a mockery of the ideal. (In practice, it would turn Civic Liberalism back into Money Liberalism.) But what kind of favor are you doing the poor kid by denying him the right to make this deal? "Breathing the air of equality" is nice, but he'd rather have the money. Who can blame him?

That is a challenge to Civic Liberalism in general, with its expensive agenda of government projects and its advice to stop worrying so much about income: maybe poor people would rather have the money. No one, or certainly no American liberal, follows the moral logic of capitalism to the bitter end: selling votes, etc. Obviously the sphere of money should not be universal. The question on the table, though, is whether liberals should abandon concern for what happens within the money sphere, in favor of trying to reduce that sphere.

Although, as I've said, I think the dispute is smaller than all these words might suggest, there are different passions at work. "Money Liberalism" prizes individual freedom; "Civic Liberalism" prizes community. Money Liberalism says: ameliorate inequality to some reasonable extent, and then stand back and let people live their own lives. Civic Liberalism is social engineering: imposing a particular view of the good life on people.

Kaus taunts Money Liberals with the question of where it all ends. After how much redistribution would victory be declared? At a time when the goal is really just to undo a bit of negative redistribution, that question isn't too pressing. But it can be asked of Civic Liberals too. How much civic equality is enough? Will you be satisfied when there are no more private schools or hospitals? When everyone rides the subway to work? When all the urban elites are marched into the countryside? (Pol Pot, the ultimate Civic Liberal?)

Obviously, the Civic Liberal goal is merely to ameliorate social stratification "to some extent," just as the Money Liberal goal is to ameliorate economic stratification "to some extent." One advantage of Money Liberalism is that greater financial equality makes for a sense of social equality (as in, for example, a nation like Australia). The reverse is not true.

Occasional bits of leveling rhetoric notwithstanding, Money Liberalism has never been very concerned about the distribution of income within the great middle class. Its main goal, I would say, concerns the poor and near-poor: getting everybody, or almost everybody, up to an income level that can provide a recognizably middle-class lifestyle. Money Liberalism's secondary goal concerns the rich: a belief that those who have been most fortunate in this country ought to pay a disproportionate share of financing the public agenda. Much of that agenda is the Civic Liberal agenda. So what's the gripe?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

Mickey Kaus's argument is built on three fallacies. First, he takes inventory of the several factors currently creating gross inequality in a market society. To fight these directly, he argues, condemns liberals to "a futile and often incoherent struggle

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against the basic forces of our economy." This premise is ahistorical, absurdly pessimistic, and just plain wrong. If Kaus really believes it, he should declare himself a Marxist. Throughout history, the market economy has led to spasms of growth with inequality, and the democratic polity has fought back to restore growth with equality. In the 1920s and 1980s, America grew more unequal. In the 1830s, the 1910s, and the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, it grew more equal. Kaus's "Hollywood effect" (inflated salaries of magnates and superstars) is nothing new. Cole Porter wrote it into "You're the Top": "You're the National Gallery / You're Garbo's salary . . ." And the wealth of the Morgans and Mellons in their heyday makes Trump and Milken look like pikers.

Periodically, democratic government has redressed inequality through such inventive devices as the Homestead acts, free public education, recognition of trade unionism, progressive taxation, Social Security pensions, the minimum wage, the GI bill, and public health insurance. The effectiveness of these devices, and the public's approval of them, has varied over time. Sometimes non-rich voters support them overwhelmingly; sometimes voters dream the market will make them all rich. But these measures do help temper the extremes of a capitalist economy, and more often than not they are popular as well as moderately effective.

This raises the second fallacy. Kaus insists there are two kinds of liberalism: my kind, which inexplicably likes to redistribute money; and his kind, which cherishes civic, or social, equality. It's a preposterous distinction. Most of the great liberal inventions address both goals. Social Security creates a sense of social solidarity as well as redistributing a lot of income. Likewise universal health insurance, the GI bill, clean public spaces, subsidized starter homes, mass transit, cross-class day care, and well-funded public schools. Liberals who are for greater money equality are invariably for greater civic equality. It's not as if some hitherto unidentified faction of "Money Liberals" opposed, say, the Peace Corps, the better to champion higher marginal tax rates. And (as Kaus acknowledges) the progressive income tax helps pay for all these programs that serve his goal of a civic sphere beyond money. The Fabians rightly called all of this a "social wage"—for a public sphere is itself a kind of income, and social equality and money equality are interdependent.

Third fallacy: Kaus abruptly vaults from practical pessimism to giddy utopianism. He finds pragmatic political reasons why redistributive policies can't work (we don't have the votes; they don't redistribute enough; unions are too weak; market forces are overwhelming, etc.) and then makes a heroic leap to embrace "civic equality" programs that are at least as politically farfetched. We're all for universal health insurance and comprehensive day care, Mickey. Do you have some votes that we don't? And by the way, who's really fought for these policies? Those bad old Money Liberals!

By the way, Kaus is wrong about my own analysis. I did indeed write that unions were one strategy for greater wage equality—one among many. But in the piece Kaus cites and many others, I've also argued for more comprehensive labor market policies to increase the productivity and hence the pay of ordinary wage and salary workers.

The liberal camp already suffers from too much fragmentation, without a bogus distinction between Money Liberals and Civic Liberals. I can only conclude the motive is product differentiation: neo-libs, as a sect, feel compelled to denigrate other libs. That's dumb as well as masochistic. The liberals of the 1930s managed to give the country a whole New Deal without ritually trashing Woodrow Wilson. In this, at least, neo-libs could take a leaf from FDR's book.

ROBERT KUTTNER

Call off the search: they've found a new idea. Well, not so new. Some of us have been writing about welfare work requirements, public spaces, and things civic for years now, in places like *The Public Interest*—not that anyone was listening. But this is not time to squabble over patrimony. Mickey Kaus has made the latest, and most compelling, case for Civic Liberalism. Now it's his turn to answer the tough questions.

I have several, but they all boil down to one: How to convince the Democratic Party? I assume that the Republican Party will remain unwelcome territory for Civic Liberals. The idea of enfranchising the poor as *citizens*, and not just as public consumers, does not make Republican hearts beat faster. Does this mean the Democrats are ready for Civic Liberalism? Hardly.

The barriers here are not natural, in my view, but historical. The original Democratic arguments for the New Deal, the Great Society, and civil rights were made in civic terms. Equal dignity, and not equal income, was at stake. But then something happened to the party—or rather, many things happened. The result is that Civic Liberals (I include myself) were no longer made welcome. Many of us would like to return to a Civic-Liberal Democratic Party. But before we can, three things would have to change.

The federal fixation. Kaus lists the public institutions he considers the most important "components of community life": "public schools, the military draft, public hospitals, highways, parks, and museums." Except for the draft, all are primarily provided by state and local governments. What's wrong with that? Nothing, so far as I can see. But try to find a Democrat willing to say so.

There used to be good Civic reasons for considering the federal government the best, perhaps only, guarantor of equal citizenship. The New Deal and civil rights legislation would not have "bubbled up" from below. Today, though, there is widespread political consensus for maintaining—even extending—the Civic state. Democrats sense it; polls show it. But there is little consensus for achieving it through expensive programs uniformly enforced from Washington.

Money Liberalism made Democrats lazy. Their political "activism" became limited to commuting between Congress, the Supreme Court, and "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report." They lost the habit of getting their shoes dirty by preaching the Civic gospel in state capitals and city halls. Much of the Civic agenda could be implemented at those levels, but it would mean reconciling ourselves to real diversity in interpreting the term "Civic." That may be hard for Democrats to swallow.

Civic goods. Kaus criticizes the check-cashing mentality of Money Liberalism for its individualistic consumerism. We can contrast check-

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cashing to civic goods—parks, schools, transportation—which are shared investments. Democrats are hardly opposed in principle to the latter. But they would like to avoid choosing between the two. The reason is that they cannot convince themselves that smaller direct checks for the poor and more civic goods for everyone (including the rich) can make the poor better off.

Parks are a good example. If a frightened welfare mother locked in her apartment received less AFDC but could take her children down safe streets to a well-maintained park, she would be better off. She would have a new backyard. True, so would a lot of yuppie joggers, and there's the rub. Any Democratic mayoral candidate suggesting that welfare spending be cut to pay for cops and geraniums would be committing suicide. But choosing checks over civic infrastructure on the margin (where politics happens) has produced the decaying cities we all complain about. If, as seems likely, the proportion of national income consumed by government will not increase dramatically, Civic Liberals are going to have to persuade Democratic Money Liberals to make this trade-off. Good luck.

Authority. Americans who dream of a European welfare state conveniently ignore what it rests on: strict social authority. This authority is mainly informal, working through custom and shame, and most people don't have to be told to work or to pick up their litter. But government scolds too. In Paris, where I live, parks are plentiful and clean; they are also well policed by attendants who are obeyed (even by skinheads). Any welfare mother finding herself on hard times can count on receiving cash, housing, health care, and day care fairly quickly. She can also count on a nosy social worker sending her to job interviews, checking under her bed, and making sure the kids (baby citizens) are eating right.

This is *real* Civic Liberalism, and it would scandalize most Democrats today. If Congress didn't protect skinheads and welfare mothers from such paternalism, the ACLU would certainly try. The embarrassing fact is that the Democrats are now more libertarian than Republicans are. Check-cashing Money Liberalism has gone hand in hand with the moral decay of welfare families, the weakening of school discipline, and the surrender of civic spaces to dangerous lowlifes. If Civic Liberalism means anything, it must mean not only expanding the Civic sphere but also setting clear bounds of acceptable behavior within it. Until Democrats realize that citizenship sometimes means having to sit up straight and tie your shoes, Civic Liberalism will have no party to call its own.

MARK LILLA

Mark Lilla is editor, with Nathan Glazer, of *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces* (Free Press).

Mickey Kaus replies:
I agree with Kuttner and Kinsley that most Money Liberals (including Kuttner and Kinsley) are also Civic Liberals. That doesn't undermine the point of my article. My point was that these two strains of liberal politics, which coexist in varying proportions in the heads of most Democrats, can and should be separated—and that liberals should drop the Money Liberal part. If the true goal of all liberals is social equality, they can achieve that goal more easily by rebuilding the public sphere of life in which money doesn't matter (Civic Liberalism) than by trying, somehow, to make the overall distribution of money more equal (Money Liberalism).

In part, this is because today's economy is generating so much income inequality (especially at the top) that no plausible political mechanism could compensate. Yes, this is a Marxist view of the economy's primacy. So? Marx wasn't wrong about everything. Kuttner seems to feel the polity will inevitably generate inequality-reducing remedies. I don't see why, and spent most of my piece arguing that various proposed remedies won't do the job. Marx-baiting aside, Kuttner doesn't venture to say which of his policies would negate the current inequality "spasm." Their effectiveness, he says, varies over time. Well, yes. That's my point. Right now they're ineffective.

One of these ineffective policies, I argued, is job training—or, as Kuttner puts it, "comprehensive labor market policies." Training is great for raising productivity, but it's not likely to counter the inequality trend. In this context I accurately quoted Kuttner's sharp criticism of training in a 1983 *Atlantic* article. That Kuttner advocates training a few paragraphs after ridiculing it is his contradiction, not mine.

Another policy that will not reverse the inequality trend is progressive taxation. Kinsley more or less concedes this point. Despite the hike in Social Security payroll taxes, the federal tax code is still progressive overall. The question is whether liberals should knock themselves out to make it more progressive. But Kinsley's "no disincentive" restriction would surely kick in before the code was progressive enough to undo much of the current inequality surge.

As Kinsley notes, I do think progressive taxation reinforces social equality by requiring an equal sharing of burdens. But it is only one way to promote social equality, and not an especially effective way. Drafting Donald Trump's son (and daughter) would make the point better than raising his taxes.

In an era when incomes are growing more unequal, income equality is a foolish basis on which to try to build equal dignity. Yet if liberals could pursue both strategies—if the strategies were "interdependent," as Kuttner claims—then, I agree, distinguishing them wouldn't be very useful. So what if income-equalizing measures don't have much effect? They wouldn't *hurt* social equality.

But the strategies aren't interdependent. They are, in practice, often contradictory. First, as Kinsley points out, political energies are limited. There are always trade-offs between the two strategies. Right now, for example, Robert McIntyre of Citizens for Tax Justice is trying to make a fuss about the regressivity of proposed excise taxes on gas and cigarettes. (See page 13.) This is a big deal for Money Liberalism. For Civic Liberalism the important thing is to raise enough revenue to rebuild the public sphere. Kuttner claims that Money Liberals are all for national health insurance—and they are, until someone suggests financing it with a value-added tax. Then they are likely to scream "regressivity" and jump overboard. Hell, I'd take a flat-rate income tax (with no loopholes) if that was the price for national health insurance.

There's also a more fundamental dissonance between the two strategies. The goal of Civic Liberalism is to create a culture that puts money in its place. Even if the rich were a lot

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less rich than they are today, we'd still need this anti-materialist culture to prevent them from thinking they're better than the rest of us. But if money is so goddamn unimportant, voters may fairly ask, why do Democrats (i.e., Money Liberals) spend so much time and energy trying to redistribute a tiny fraction of it? Obviously, Money Liberals think money is very important indeed.

That is explicit in Kinsley's response. Kinsley rejects my suggestion that Money Liberals are really pursuing social equality. He wants money equality for its own sake, but (of course) not total money equality. How much, then? The question "isn't too pressing," he says, because he'll never reach that point. But inability to reach a goal isn't an excuse for not having a goal.

If lots of money inequality is bad in itself, then a little less is still bad. Kinsley is a capitalist, but he can't be a very happy one, since capitalism constantly generates money inequalities he might want to eliminate (if only those darned disincentives didn't get in the way). That may be why, at the end of his comments, Kinsley seems to retreat, hinting he wants redistribution only at the bottom (with taxation of the Trumps now justified only as burden-sharing).

In contrast, the goal of Civic Liberalism is quite clear. It's not to get people onto subways. It's not to "ameliorate social stratification 'to some extent.' " It's to *end* social stratification—to achieve social equality. We want to go all the way—and there's at least the hope we will succeed.

The difference between Money and Civic Liberalism, then, is significant, in practice and theory. But I concede it's not quite as significant as I made it out, in two respects. First, accepting rich and non-rich doesn't mean you ignore how some people get rich. Bank robbers, for example. And corporate CEOs, perhaps. I can't defend the current boom in CEO pay; it seems to me the product of a breakdown in the market's normal accountability. But even if accountability is restored, some people will still get very rich. Social egalitarians should also be wary of insisting that wealth go *only* to the deserving (as opposed to the lucky). If all money were merited, after all, the rich would be justified in thinking they were better—the very inference Civic Liberals want to avoid.

Second, Kinsley emphasizes that both varieties of liberal want to lift incomes at the bottom, at least to a level where a dignified life becomes possible. He momentarily pretends that's all Money Liberals really care about (a disingenuous claim when Representatives Gephardt and Rostenkowski are railing about the after-tax share of the *top* 5 percent). And he is wrong, I think, to separate out the question of *how* the bottom is to be helped. Money Liberalism lends itself naturally to the check-mailing solution to the poverty problem. If money is the most important thing poor people lack, after all, why not just give it to them? Civic Liberals such as Lilla, who focus on the question of equal dignity, are more apt to recognize that dignity is, properly, impossible without work. They will tend to favor offering jobs, not checks, to non-working families, with cash supplements reserved for workers.

Does Civic Liberalism have a better chance of succeeding than Money Liberalism? Lilla persuades me, at least, that Democrats would have to rethink their rights-oriented resistance to social authority. The ACLU would be a nuisance. But the ACLU wasn't wildly popular with the electorate last time I checked. Similarly, if Lilla thinks it's "suicide" for a Democratic mayoral candidate to advocate cutting welfare checks in order to hire cops and clean up parks, he's been living in Paris too long. Welfare benefits have been shaved in most states. The problem is that this doesn't solve the underclass mess. That will take a federal jobs-not-welfare program (guaranteeing work and stopping checks in a single state would probably produce disruptive migrations). Mandatory service and universal health insurance can't be run by the states either. All of which leads me to conclude that Democrats don't have to do much rethinking of the federalism issue. Civic Liberals shouldn't sell their Capitol Hill townhouses. If anything, Democrats of late have been a bit too impressed with the inherently limited reforms they've been able to undertake at the state and local level.

Kinsley emphasizes two other, related, problems of Civic Liberalism. The strategy does lend itself to facile coercion—make everybody serve, make everybody go to the same doctor, etc. And any class-mixing prompted only by authoritarian force is likely to be shallow and artificial. These are dangers that must be put in perspective, though. What to Kinsley seems an outlandish breach of the moral logic of capitalism is really only the draft we had in World War II, or the health system they have in Canada (where free exchange of medical services is sharply curtailed). When, during the Civil War, rich Americans *were* allowed to pay substitutes to serve for them, citizens didn't revel in the benefits of voluntary exchange. They started bloody riots. Civic equality can be more important than money.

Nor do I think Civic Liberals need resort to highly artificial class-mixing measures—say, forcing the rich to ride the subways by restricting cars. There's nothing artificial about national health insurance, for example—it's badly needed, by the affluent as well as the poor, in order to prevent medical costs from swallowing 20 percent of our GNP. Parks aren't artificial class-mixers, nor schools, nor day-care centers. Wherever possible, Civic Liberals would take advantage of such genuine, cross-class interests.

I don't want to claim that social equality is easily achieved. Solving the welfare problem and integrating the classes in schools are especially complex, generations-long projects. I do claim these difficult things are easier to do than stopping income inequality (which would require solving the welfare problem anyway). Is that "giddy utopianism"?

Americans tend to be social egalitarians rather than money egalitarians. This isn't a new idea, but it is the ultimate practical advantage of pursuing a relatively pure Civic Liberalism. If Democrats follow Kuttner's never-criticize-the-left approach, mixing Civic Liberalism with open-ended, economistic money-rearrangement, then I agree there probably aren't many votes out there they don't already have. If Democrats start making clear distinctions—becoming the party of equal dignity, not equal incomes, spending money to support workers but not to mail checks to welfare mothers, raising taxes in order to rebuild parks and roads and hospitals rather than to reshape the upper deciles of the income distribution—then, yes, I think they'd find some votes they haven't been getting. Millions, in fact. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Selling, Shooting, Staging

Buried in an alleged comedy called **Cadillac Man** (Orion), which stars Robin Williams, is a serious idea. Williams plays a car salesman in Long Island City who chases women, owes money, and is in trouble with his boss because he hasn't been selling enough cars. A one-day sale is coming up on the car lot where he works, during which each salesman is expected to sell twelve cars. On that day troubles bombard Williams: pressure from the money-lending hood to whom he owes $20,000; a report from his ex-wife that their fifteen-year-old daughter has disappeared; and just when he's close to closing two sales, the arrival on the car lot of the married woman with whom he's having a fling, along with her husband, whom she has talked into buying a car. Then the capper: a jealous young husband, played by Tim Robbins, rides his motorcycle through the showroom's glass doors, takes an automatic rifle off his back, shoots up the place, and threatens the lives of customers and staff—especially the latter who, he thinks, have been sleeping with his wife, who works there.

Williams is not the one who has been cuckolding this particular husband: it's his boss who is guilty. Yet Williams is the one who confesses to guilt. Then he proceeds to talk volubly to Robbins, conning the frenzied, volatile young man out of his plans for revenge. After a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, he even cons him into allowing the hostages to leave—except Williams himself—and into surrendering to the police, who have surrounded the place.

All this is supposed to be funny, which it rarely is, but there's a serious comic idea in it, based on an aspect of American life, an idea that David Mamet would have grasped firmly. Here is a character who has been shown to be at least normally craven and who has only one compulsion outside of amour: selling. In a moment of crisis, with his life—and other lives—at stake, the selling drive takes over. We have previously seen him forget decorum at a funeral in order to push a sale; here he forgets physical danger in order to push a different kind of sale. He even falsely admits guilt in order to get his prospect's ear; then, step by step, he sells this lunatic young man a series of moves leading to capitulation.

In the last scene of the first act of Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the key scene in an epitomical play, a real estate salesman is having lunch at a table next to a stranger, begins to talk with him as anyone might strike up a conversation (although with more pith), and eventually finds himself sliding toward selling that man a Florida lot just as an alcoholic might find himself sliding toward a tavern door when he had been headed somewhere else.

Ken Friedman's screenplay muffs its chance to fix a comparable comedy-drama of addiction. Presumably the core of Friedman's script was the idea of a salesman selling his way out of a life-threatening jam, a mode of acquisitiveness being turned to anomalous humane ends. But the idea is fuzzed over. Perhaps Williams himself, a star with clout, refashioned the script to suit his comic style. Whoever was responsible, the result is no help to Williams or the picture. He tries to sizzle along, but he has no ground under his feet, and he is surrounded by cliché characters. Except the Robbins role, perhaps, but since the Williams role isn't realized, Robbins is doomed.

The title has no relevance: the word Cadillac isn't spoken or seen in the film itself. If this sort of thing is bothersome, brace yourself for something called *The Adventures of Ford Fairlane* that is forthcoming. And console yourself with the fact that this sort of social-identification-via-plug isn't new. In 1964 there was *The Yellow Rolls-Royce*, in 1950 *The Yellow Cab Man*.

If there were serial numbers for war films of a certain pattern, as there are for typewriters and automobiles, the number on **Fire Birds** (Touchstone) would be too long to print here. This is warmed-over *Top Gun*, to name only the most recent antecedent, but this time, instead of aircraft carriers, it's the Army's training of crews for the Apache, the armed pursuit helicopter. Two points about *Fire Birds*, however, are worth notice. First, films have found a new Evil Empire, now that the Soviet Union no longer fills the bill. Now we have South American drug cartels, a change that the last James Bond picture initiated and that is obviously going to

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Longtime Companion. *Craig Lucas's screenplay traces the history of AIDS between 1981 and 1989, as it affects a group of New York gays. No exploitation; honesty and compassion. (Reviewed 5/28/90)* **Pathfinder.** *Made in Lapland, in the Lapp language. A folk epic done with style and color by good actors and a good first-time director, Nils Gaup. It's like a minor, snowbound John Ford film. (6/11/90)* **Q&A.** *Sidney Lumet at home in a New York police-and-drug story. Excellent city flavor and exceptionally strong acting. (5/21/90)* **Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!** *Madness in Madrid, as Pedro Almodóvar recounts an enforced romance, which becomes genuine, between a kidnapped porno star and her adoring captor. Flashy fun. (5/14/90)* **—SK**

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be around a while. (This film begins with an epigraph from a George Bush speech declaring war on drugs, a quotation that has all the persuasion of *Fire Birds* itself.) Here the cartels have high-tech aircraft of their own, along with an ace killer-pilot. Naturally he must be eliminated, after which we are to infer that the drug trade will diminish.

Second, a U.S. scouting helicopter in the big fight is flown by a woman. She is romantically involved with the hero, one of the assault pilots, and they chit-chat over the radio as they go into battle. Women are no longer a novelty in military pictures, but *Fire Birds* opens the prospect of romantic banter in all *kinds* of war-film situations. How about two paratroopers as they descend?

The producers have made the mistake of casting Nicolas Cage and Sean Young as the man and woman. These two do not help this venture into new territory because they lack the credibility to make the fakery appealing. Cage was a lot better as the baker in *Moonstruck*, Young as the backseat amorist in *No Way Out*.

The Canadian writer-director Denys Arcand exemplifies in his own person a classic trouble with filmmaking around the world throughout the history of film: directing talent is always more plentiful than writing talent. Arcand wrote and directed *The Decline of the American Empire*, in which he handled well the directorial problems with a screenplay that was largely discussion, but unfortunately he failed to write interesting discussion. Now he has directed **Jesus of Montreal** (Orion Classics) equally skillfully, but his screenplay is freighted with sophomoric insights about the conflict between Christian principles and Christian practice.

The nub of the story is the presentation of a Passion Play by a Montreal church in a new, immediate manner. One man engaged for the play is a young actor whose most recent job was dubbing a porno film. The contrast between jobs is typical of the film's subtlety. The more the actor of Christ rehearses and plays the role, the greater effect it has on him personally. This factor, along with others, reminds the viewer of Dassin's *He Who Must Die* (1958), which was made from Kazantzakis's novel about a man who plays Christ in a Passion Play.

Arcand's whole film soon becomes a laborious schema to comment unenlighteningly on modern society. His adequate direction doesn't help. In fact the real contrast here is not between religion and society but between Arcand's relatively sophisticated directing and his banal writing. •

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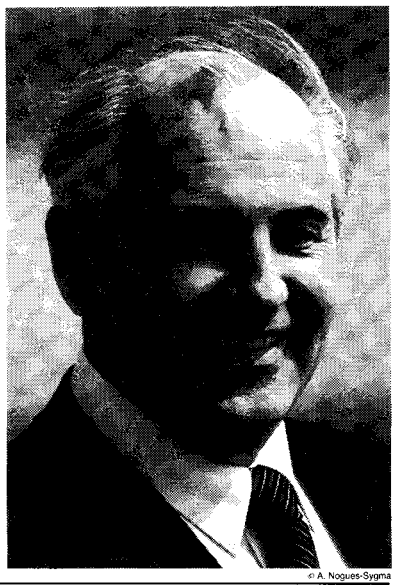
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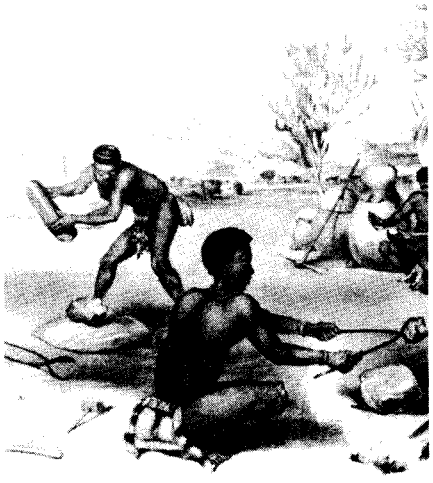

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Robert Brustein on Theater

The NEA Belly Up

Bleeding from the most savage political bites in its twenty-five-year history, the National Endowment for the Arts—that profoundly underfunded government agency devoted to the development of culture and the needs of artists—is now foundering in the water with its belly up for all the cormorants to feed on. There couldn't be a messier time to consider congressional reauthorization, what with the Mapplethorpe-Serrano flap still fresh and the Jesse Helms-sponsored obscenity amendment raising every artist's hackles. Overwhelmed by controversy, the agency is now in serious danger of being dismantled; at the very least, it is likely to be fundamentally restructured.

The most hotly debated proposal—it was first floated by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies—would distribute sixty percent of NEA funds to the states (at present they receive twenty percent) for the purpose of such peripheral activities as arts education, arts access, and rural and inner-city projects. The remaining forty percent of federal money would go to the largest cultural institutions and even more arts education. Following shouts of betrayal by the arts community, the state agencies have now retracted their rank-breaking proposal, but since the move placates various pressure groups and constituencies, it has found congressional favor, and the damage has been done.

It is remarkable that such a financially anemic agency could generate such enormous controversy. (The NEA now distributes only $171 million of a federal budget that is approaching a trillion.) But the NEA is merely the crucible in which many volatile issues of our time are boiling. In an article in the May issue of *Commentary*, Samuel Lipman (a man with whom I seldom agree) has correctly attributed the problem to the fact that we have no national cultural policy—and that we do. The absence of policy is reflected in a failure to define precisely what we mean by the arts. And this vacuum has created a policy biased toward affirmative action, multiculturalism, and the cutting edge. "Until now," Lipman adds:

> our not having a cultural policy has meant no more than the tendency of our national leaders . . . to regard art as trivial diversionary pastimes, at best mildly amusing or sentimentally uplifting. . . . But . . . our not having a policy has served to facilitate and consolidate the policy we do have—namely, the effort to exploit the vestigial prestige of art and culture to accomplish radical social and political goals.

Despite Lipman's tendency to spot political subversives in every atelier, some of the points he makes are hard to dispute. The populist assault on "elitism," which began in the Carter years when the NEA was chaired by Livingston Biddle, has now turned into a full-scale assault on "Eurocentric" culture as a white, upper-class, male-dominated expression. Lipman is reluctant to acknowledge the genuine contributions of non-European cultures (Asian and African art, for example, have had a profound and undeniable impact on modern Western forms), but there is justice in his charge that "multiculturalism" is now being widely used "as a device of political consciousness-raising." He is also correct in recognizing that current grant-making procedures are reflecting these motives. The NEA presently penalizes arts institutions that fail to hire enough minorities, while many of the larger private foundations have been channeling most of their arts funding to "Third World" and feminist projects—in the vain hope of resolving through culture the political inequities of the social system.

It is heartbreaking that the arts are being measured—even by the high-minded Lipman—according to purely political criteria, when the NEA was so carefully designed, in its enabling legislation, to insulate the artist from political intervention. Conservatives have grown obsessed with policing artistic expression for any evidence of deviation from norms of morality and patriotism, while liberals are pressing artistic expression into the service of social and political reform. One is reminded of poor Doctor Stockmann, in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, vainly trying to tell the community that its wells are poisoned, only to be drowned out by the deafening clamor of special pleading from the right and the left. In such a pious climate, it is no wonder that the only issue on which everyone agrees is arts education, though without the moral support of the NEA, there will be considerably less art produced to be educated about. There's no sense in training riders when you're preparing to shoot the horse.

The crisis has coerced the arts community into formulating its own political agenda. Just as the IRS has converted every citizen into an accountant, so recent events have turned many artists into marchers, campaigners, protesters, and First Amendment lawyers. Joseph Papp has taken the radical step of refusing a $50,000 NEA grant for his Festival Latino because of the obscenity clause. And although it is possible that he—unlike the rest of us—could continue to survive without his annual government grant to professional theaters (about 3 percent of the New York Public Theater's budget, as compared with 5 percent to 50 percent for smaller theaters), Papp's action puts pressure on all grantees to reconsider their relationship to the NEA. A letter-writing campaign originated by arts lobbies, designed to counteract an organized assault on the agency by such conservative groups as the American Family Association, has just begun to flood the postal boxes on Capitol Hill. But it is a sad commentary on our culture when the future of the arts in America is determined by a congressman's mail.

Right now, it is certainly being determined by a congressman's bile. The same Helms-sponsored obscenity clause that impelled Papp to refuse a grant has influenced the National Council on the Arts to cancel two more, while deferring final approval on another eighteen deemed to be controversial. In a closed meeting, this advisory group overruled panel recommendations by killing two of the three $40,000 grants awarded to the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art for no other reason than that it sponsored the Mapplethorpe show. According to one of its members, Jacob Neusner, the council thought that approving these grants would appear to be an act of defiance toward Congress: "We are listening to our critics . . . and we're not simply going to rubber-stamp the decisions." Who said the NEA didn't have a policy? The policy is fear.

The fact is that, for a brief moment, America did have an arts policy. It was founded primarily on excellence, and administered by peer panels focused on artistic quality regardless (rather than because) of color, sex, ethnicity, or creed, whether "cutting edge" or establishment. For that reason, the arts in this country, for a brief moment, were once a genuinely pluralistic expression. The concept of excellence—of meritocratic achievement within a democratic society—was not exclusive but em-

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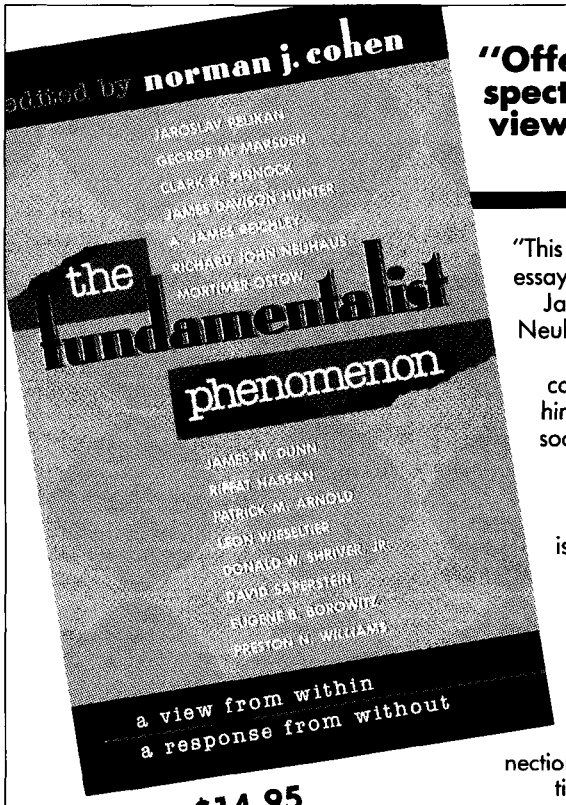
bracing, and perfectly in harmony with our founding ideals. Excellence was a goal toward which any talented person could strive, and it was considered the function of government, rather than the obligation of the arts, to foster the social conditions that would help all qualified people attain it. Today, this concept is under general attack as racist, elitist, or discriminatory by those who have substituted relative values for traditional standards. As a result, respect for quality has become so alien to American life that a TV news special recently devoted a program to a Southern firm whose unusual distinction lay in trying to create a superior product. "The object," Chekhov said, "is to bring the people up to Gogol, not Gogol down to the people." Today, we placate the people not by trying to address their material needs but rather by turning culture into a populist wrecking ball, leaving Gogol buried under the rubble.

In his 1963 report to President Kennedy on the Arts and the National Government—a report that preceded the founding of the NEA in 1965 by Lyndon Johnson—August Hecksher wrote that "the United States will be judged—and its place in history ultimately assessed—not alone by its military or economic power, but by the quality of its civilization." I am told that Kennedy, who read the report the same week he was assassinated, was preparing to use it as the basis for a major national initiative in the arts. At any rate, he replied to Hecksher that "I have long believed, as you know, that the quality of America's cultural life is an element of immense importance in the scales by which our worth will ultimately be weighed." I have long been skeptical of the Camelot mystique, but the tenor of this response is a far cry from Reagan's thin-lipped dismissal of the arts or Bush's halfhearted endorsement, and it is that change in tone that has strengthened the hand of those who would destroy the NEA.

Ultimately, despite its political form, the problem is a spiritual one. It is the result of American Puritanism. This is clear enough in the fundamentalist religious attacks on anything that deviates from the purity and sanctity of some prelapsarian ideal. What is less clear is the Puritanism of the left that subjects the arts to utilitarian tests. For the same intolerant sectarianism that closed down English theater for eighteen years (before seeking religious "freedom" in America) was also responsible for the belief that the doors of heaven were opened by charitable deeds. Thus, the arts today are valued not as good work, but as "good works"—insofar as they can demonstrate their usefulness to the body politic through access, education, economic reinforcement, and social engineering. Or to use the bureaucratic language of a recently issued report, sponsored by both public and private granting agencies, it is the function of art to make "a profound impact on American society and the changes that are shaping it."

The function of art is indeed spiritual and formative, though not in the way our neo-Puritan friends believe. Great works of art suggest that humankind is capable of transcending its material needs, of remaking a badly fashioned world through the agency of the imagination. They do this sometimes through beauty and exaltation, sometimes through shock and provocation—at times in a traditional manner, at times through new forms—but always with the explicit or implicit purpose of rearranging consciousness and reordering senses. The artist who creates this work may be a raging egotist, a moral idiot, a social misfit, a subversive scoundrel, but the work itself remains the ultimate measure of how he will be regarded in the future. For the artist may be answerable to society for his conduct. For his talent he is answerable only to posterity.

Let me close with an anecdote from an ancient Chinese play (a variant can



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be found in the Book of Kings) that Brecht used as the climax of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. In the adjudication of a maternity conflict, two women are asked to pull a child out of a circle in order to determine which is the true mother. The judge awards the child to the one who refuses, since she is obviously too fond of the boy to harm him. The opposing political forces now pulling the NEA to pieces are showing no such tender compunction. •

Ethnicity Unbound

BY ERNEST GELLNER

Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the U.S.S.R. by Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda

(Free Press, 407 pp., $29.95)

Since the October Revolution, Russia and the lands associated with it have lived under a dictatorship committed to the implementation of a messianic, utopian social theory. Among the many weaknesses of that social theory was a failure to appreciate the nature and the importance of national sentiment in industrial society. That failure, and the internal logic of centralized dictatorship in general, and the development of this utopianism in particular (the firm unification of the entire economy with the polity and with the ideological apparatus) all led to the deprivation of large numbers of ethnic groups of real political autonomy, and in lesser degrees of cultural autonomy as well. Bohdan Nahaylo, of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, and Victor Swoboda, of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, report that the Soviet census of 1979 identified 104 nations and ethnic groups within the borders of the Soviet Union. Sometimes a larger figure of around 120 is invoked, but it is all a bit arbitrary and depends on what criteria are adopted. The general outline of the situation, however, is not in doubt.

With the coming of glasnost, the various nationalities have, in one way or another, reasserted themselves. It is natural to sympathize with them, and they have indeed received much encouragement. Anything less would betray one as a partisan of centralized dictatorship, of gray cultural homogeneity. I have no desire to be counted as a supporter of either of those things. Still, I must confess that I have reservations about unqualified support for the Soviet ethnicities during the current turbulence.

The "nationalities problem" of the Soviet Union is not only—perhaps not even primarily—a problem that arises between ethnic groups and an imperial political center. It is also a problem that arises *between* diverse ethnic groups. (Nahaylo and Swoboda's book fails to stress this adequately.) Perhaps this point can be best conveyed by a brief review of the interplay of ethnicity and politics throughout all of Eastern Europe, not just the Russian-dominated part of it, ever since Napoleon.

This history may be said to have taken place in four stages. In 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the whole of Eastern Europe was divided among three (no more) empires. Not one of those empires was based on the principle of nationality. Each of them had a religious foundation. One was the upholder of Sunni Islam, the second of Counter-Reformation Catholicism, the third of Orthodox Christianity. At the time, this was deemed a perfectly proper and natural way to run societies.

This religious-dynastic stage was followed by stage two. In the course of the nineteenth century, the shadow cast by the coming commercial-industrial civilization tore more and more people out of their intimate and local communities and made them live in wider, anonymous, and mobile societies. In those societies, formal and written communication with strangers became an important precondition of professional and social effectiveness. For the first time in history, a written, school-transmitted High Culture was no longer a specialist privilege, but the daily idiom of an entire society, or of a very large part of it. The consequence was the realization that people spoke a culture as they spoke prose, and that it made an enormous difference to their personal prospects, and to their psychic comfort, whether the culture they used was identical with the one employed by the bureaucracy that governed them. The political consequence of these new realities was that people became "nationalists." They wanted either to belong to the dominant culture or to turn the culture with which they identified into the dominant culture of a possibly new political unit, in which they could then feel thoroughly at home.

Stage two led to a lot of nationalist agitation and turbulence, and (thanks to the First World War) to the definitive breakup of two of the three old empires and their replacement by smaller political units. These smaller entities, some of which had already emerged before the war, invoked not religious faith, but the principle of nationality. The state was legitimated by an ethnic culture, and its role was to protect that culture.

But lo and behold, discontent did not cease. The ethnic patchwork of Eastern Europe is so complex, its cultural and linguistic groups are so intertwined, so often separated not territorially but by function and status, that the redrawing of boundaries had the effect only of changing the identity of the rulers and the ruled.

The mess could be tidied up, and the discontent eliminated, in three ways: assimilation, transplantation of populations, and genocide. All three came to be used, rather extensively. The second and the third are not normally held to be morally acceptable, and so they have been implemented in the main only when wartime restrictions on information make them easier to hide, or when postwar indignation at atrocities already committed makes retaliation on a similar scale briefly feasible. This is stage three, the most terrible of the stages of the impact of ethnicity on politics, and it is best described by an expression the Nazis used: *bei Nacht und Nebel*, by night and fog. The period of *Nacht und Nebel* did not come at the same time for all its victims. The Armenians experienced it rather early, the Greeks and the Turks somewhat later. Its peak, of course, came in the 1940s.

But there is also stage four. Its existence is partly hypothetical, alas, inasmuch as we do not possess a fully documented and stable version of it. But there are at least indications that it is emerging in some parts of the world. In the past, intense nationalist hatreds were provoked above all by two factors: industrial mobility caused people to identify with a literate culture rather than with a narrow local community, and members of diverse cultures differed significantly in the extent to which they shared in the new industrial affluence. At a certain high stage of economic development, the first of these factors still continues to op-

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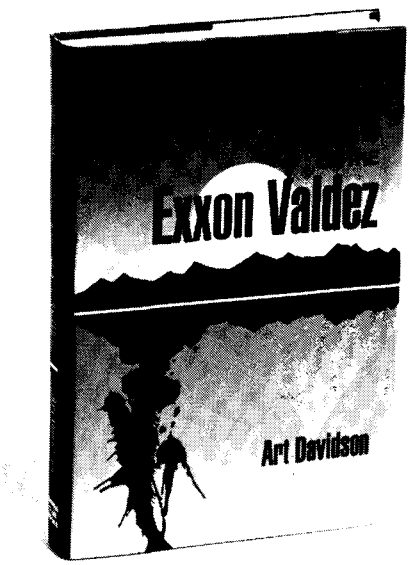

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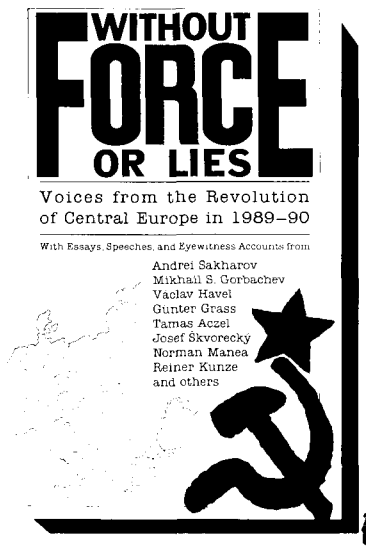

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erate. The second one, however, weakens significantly. Once a shared idiom of industrialism underlies cultural differentiation, which then virtually becomes phonetic and not semantic, and members of diverse cultures differ from each other only in their formal and decorative aspects, and access to the perks of industrialism becomes relatively even, then ethnic murderousness diminishes. I do not consider this thesis to be demonstrated, but I do think that we are allowed to hope that it will turn out to be true, and some indications at least of its truth can be found, say, in Western Europe.

Now comes the crunch. The territory covered by the Soviet Union did not experience all these stages. It certainly passed through the first two, but then its further development was arrested by a restoration of the old ideocratic empire—under new management, of course, and this time under a secular, and for a while very powerful, belief system. *Nacht und Nebel* occurred in the Communist empire, but not under the auspices, or in the interests, of ethnic tidiness. Groups were indeed forcibly moved, but the patchwork remained. The ethnic situation was, all in all, frozen for a time.

Now the Soviet Union is on the move. Something very big and dramatic is happening, though nobody knows how it will end. As far as ethnic relations are concerned, the problem is this: Will the nations of the Soviet Union now go through their own version of *Nacht und Nebel*, or might they bypass murderousness and go straight, at least in some measure, to stage four? That is the question. If the Soviet Union breaks up in a sudden, unnegotiated manner, stage three—*Nacht und Nebel*—becomes a distinct possibility.

Nahaylo and Swoboda's book does what its subtitle promises. It provides a history of the nationalities problem in the Soviet Union since the country's inception, and also a somewhat perfunctory summary of the (highly relevant) earlier history of the ethnic groups now found within the Soviet Union. It is packed with facts, and the number of footnotes supporting the assertions is impressive. Of course, the speed of current developments is liable to date the book rather quickly, but that is inevitable. Even if events overtake it, however, the information it contains will continue to be useful. It is, though, somewhat short on theory, and the lack of deep interpretation is relevant to the general position that its authors argue or presuppose—a position that should not be embraced uncritically.

Nahaylo and Swoboda's overall tone is

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For Vilnius

Perhaps I am entitled to add something to the present discussion on Lithuania. Its capital, Vilnius, or as it also has been called, Wilno, is the city of my adolescence and youth. After many decades, it is still the center of my internal geography. And I know by experience how many obstacles confront a writer who wants to talk about its architectural beauty, tragic history, and national imbroglios.

A northern city, yet predominantly baroque in its forty Roman Catholic churches, Wilno of the 1920s and 1930s preserved its traditions and its languages: it was Polish for the majority of the population, Yiddish for a significant minority. Lithuanians were few. Wilno then belonged to Poland, though independent Lithuania claimed the city as its historic capital and spoke of its Polish occupation. I went through high school and university in Polish; my family spoke that language since the sixteenth century. Still, my cousin, the French poet Oscar V. de L. Milosz, was, after World War I, the first diplomatic representative of independent Lithuania in Paris, and defended its right to Wilno at international forums.

The Lithuanians are an odd tribe: they are an example of a modern nation born out of philology. Their language has made a comeback after surviving for centuries only among the peasantry. Archaic, closest to Sanskrit of the Indo-European linguistic family, Lithuanian, because of its conservative features, has been both a misfortune for its speakers and their protection against encroachments by their Slavic neighbors. The Lithuanians have proved their attachment to their tongue, and in doing so they have revealed a peculiar trait of their national character, a bullheaded stubbornness.

Today Vilnius is predominantly Lithuanian. Few traces remain of what was called the "Jerusalem of the North," a great center of Jewish learning. The Jewish population was wiped out by the Nazis. As for the Polish-speaking people, one example of a family I knew suffices: the father was deported by the Russians to Siberia, one son was executed by the Nazis, his brother and sister migrated to Poland after 1945. Many thousands emigrated to Poland rather than wait for deportation to the east. Some 100,000 Poles remained in Vilnius. The number of those in Lithuania today who declare themselves Polish is around 300,000, but there is a reason why their complaints of discrimination, to an extent justified, find little echo in Poland: Solidarity sympathizes with the Lithuanian independence movement, while the lack of enlightened leaders among the Lithuanian Poles makes them an ideal tool for Moscow against Lithuania. It is true that the three Polish language deputies to the Lithuanian diet, from Vilnius, voted for independence, but those from other regions remained aloof.

In the miraculous year 1989, I nearly believed in the beginning of a new era in international relations. Yet the memory of a certain event, incessantly vivid, cannot but induce me to skepticism today. On June 15, 1940, on a street in Vilnius, I heard the clanking of Soviet tanks entering the peaceful city to the frozen stupefaction of its inhabitants. The occupation of a neutral little country by a powerful neighbor was a blatant violation of international law. Nobody realized then that the tanks were implementing a secret clause in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 23, 1939, but the timing was perfect: France was falling and the Germans were entering Paris.

I have heard voices trying to justify the annexation of the Baltic states by invoking analogies in the imperial designs of other great powers. These people do not seem to know what they are talking about. The sunny June day of 1940 meant a descent into the abyss. Imagine the United States invaded and occupied, imagine 30 million citizens deported to labor camps in the frozen wastes of northern Canada near the polar circle. Such, more or less, was the proportion of losses in this small country of two-and-a-half million inhabitants. Had Lithuania presented Gorbachev with a bill for the years of slave labor by its nationals, and for the thousands who died in gulags or survived physically or mentally broken, the amount would exceed the fabulous sum that Gorbachev is demanding as a ransom for independence.

Let me state this bluntly: together with thousands of other Polish Lithuanians or Lithuanian Poles, I lost the country of my fathers, of my childhood and youth. Had I stayed there, I would probably have landed in a gulag. Had I bought my existence at the price of debasement, I would have had nothing to do there anyway, being a Polish language writer. I am in a position similar to that of a German who was forced to leave the land of his ancestors, because that land, after 1945, became a part of the Soviet Union, Poland, or Czechoslovakia. And I understand those Germans who cannot forget, for the magnetic needles of their hearts point eastward.

Thus I do not speak as a Lithuanian, but as a refugee. And yet I wish well the country of my birth, and I do not dream of changing borders in our part of Europe, as, unfortunately, do some Germans. In Poland I have found many people for whom the loss of their cities has been a permanent tragedy, but they realize that what is past belongs to the past, even if those cities, Wilno and Lvov, were more important for the Polish sensibility, in many respects, than Warsaw or Krakow.

Lithuanians deserve to have an independent country. For fifty years they preserved an unflinching will to be free, and there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that sooner or later they will achieve this goal. They are a disciplined and unified people, familiar with democratic ways and the use of the popular vote. Like their neighbors, the Latvians and the Estonians, their cultural roots bring them closer to the Scandinavians than to the Slavs, and they would probably be economically helped by the family of Scandinavian nations.

The United States has never recognized the annexation of the Baltic states, and this brings honor to the American tradition of opposing European tyrannies. Today the foreign domination over the Baltic republics is a vestige of the ominous era we all would like to leave behind. If the American administration is now ready to compromise on this principle, even at the price of self-contradiction, we, of whatever nationality, who are not primarily concerned with the game of superpowers, should keep alive the sense of what is just. It is not rare that insisting on elementary justice is the most fruitful diplomatic policy.

CZESLAW MILOSZ

Czeslaw Milosz won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1980.

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one of indignation, impatience, and irritation with Gorbachev. They believe that he has not proceeded fast enough in correcting the wrongs committed against nationalities and ethnicities in the past and perpetuated by the present structure. Of the reality of those wrongs, there can be no doubt. But a question remains: What will happen if this structure disintegrates? For there is simply no way of redrawing the boundaries so that "legitimate" national aspirations are, all of them, satisfied, so that no one suffers intolerably.

Quite the contrary: a number of principles can be invoked to govern a breakup or a rearrangement of the Soviet Union, each of them plausible or persuasive on its own. There is the principle of respecting majority wishes; of historic and geographic continuity; that every culture is entitled to its own political roof, though some of them fail to command a majority in any one place; that majorities created artificially in the days of dictatorship should not count, whether those majorities were engendered by politically motivated transplantation or merely by economic drift. And so on. The problem is that the implementation of some of these principles leads to the violation of others; and the violation of some of them, in quite a number of places, leads to murderous reactions.

I have no access to the private thoughts of the present leader of the Soviet Union. His public acts and pronouncements have to satisfy a number of constituencies, and they do not provide conclusive evidence about his aims, even assuming that those aims are fully articulated and firm. But Gorbachev has definitely put the Soviet Union on a new course, in which the attainment of an efficient and pluralist society clearly trumps the requirement of maintaining an empire. The liberation of non-Soviet Eastern Europe has only been in part the achievement of the locals themselves; it was also a response to signals emitted from the old imperial center, that the empire would no longer maintain itself by force.

Some of the decision-makers in the Kremlin must have reached the conclusion that this empire was not worth the trouble, and they allowed their views to be known and to have their effect. There is no reason to suppose that some of them do not have similar priorities within what are, after all, the arbitrary boundaries of the Soviet Union. But their room for maneuver is more limited there. The domino effect of surrender to unilateral decisions by (justly) incensed ethnic groups is much greater there. If these decisions play themselves out to the full, they would presumably destroy perestroika.

If this diagnosis is correct, what follows? That the West should use its influence not merely to restrain the center from using strong methods against the ethnic irredentists—methods that are ineffective when used with restraint, and counterproductive when used effectively—but also that the West should urge the dissidents in the peripheries to moderate not their ultimate aims, but their immediate implementation and expression. The correct strategy, it seems to me, would be to aim at maximum independence in real, institutional, and (one hopes) irreversible terms, while permitting some saving of face for the center, with the goal of eventually negotiating the rival claims between different nationalities.

The Marxists liked to believe that ethnic hatreds were invented and fomented by previous rulers in the interest of perpetuating their own rule. Happily, we haven't heard too much of that argument lately; few are tempted to claim that the hatred between Armenians and Azerbaijanis is the work of Russians, in the hope of maintaining their hold over the Caucasus. The whole idea of the deliberate, Machiavellian fostering of nationalism is at last discredited (though I have recently heard alleged KGB manipulations invoked in this way). And yet the overall attitude of Nahaylo and Swoboda would seem to be based on the unstated assumption that something like the Marxist-Machiavellian view of ethnic politics is true. They certainly seem to think that once the sins of the center are (quite correctly) listed, the genuinely plural and internecine nature of the ethnic problem need not be taken into account. It gives the whole story a curiously moralistic, black-and-white quality, and does no justice to reality.

The End of Empire may indeed be imminent for the Soviets. But before it is acclaimed uncritically, let us consider carefully what it involves. The successor states of the broken empire will benefit or suffer from the arbitrary decisions of earlier Soviet political map-makers, or they will have to fight it out. They will inherit problems of aggrieved minorities no less serious than those that haunted their imperial predecessors. Small, often weak regimes will inherit sizable minorities composed of members of the previous imperial culture: just as the *Volks-Deutsche* haunted the weak buffer states of interwar Europe, aggrieved *Volks-Russen* (or should one say *narodo-Ruskye*) will haunt the new small states. And the idea of a civil war in a territory well endowed with nuclear weapons has a macabre quality.

It has often been said that the Russians benefited immensely from the land-mass nature of their empire: that they weren't obliged, for that reason, to decolonize at the same time as the sea-based empires. But they are now paying the price of the territorial continuity of their domination. When the British decolonized India, enormous numbers of people could perish in the Hindu-Muslim conflict without destabilizing Britain. The French were very nearly destabilized by the loss of Algeria, but prosperity at home, and de Gaulle, saved them. The running sore of Ulster, where it is not possible to abandon *Volks-Protestanten*, is not destabilizing Britain. The Russians, however, do not possess the advantages of an Irish or a Mediterranean sea, or of a stable, deeply legitimate political system, or of prosperity, and they are blessed with umpteen Ulsters and Algerias, with their own *pieds noirs*.

They deserve some sympathy and support. The English would be only too glad to be rid of Ulster, and I wonder how many Russians wish to cling to theirs. Our authors admit that some of them, at any rate, do not. But decolonization is not a simple matter, lending itself to glib moralizing. I am not arguing for the preservation of the ethnic status quo. All in all, I believe that in ethno-cultural matters, small is beautiful. It is difficult not to be impressed, for instance, by the astonishing cultural vitality of the Estonians, who can produce, with a population of about one million, a richness of activities often unrivaled by units of much greater size, which have the misfortune of being merely segments of larger totalities. In the end, the creation of such vigorous local units is desirable, and they will not be effective unless their political autonomy or independence is also genuine. I can also understand the tacit reasoning of those who are deeply skeptical of the prospects of liberalization in the Soviet Union, who have their doubts about the chances of Gorbachev's success and simply want to get the hell out as fast and as completely as possible, while the going is still good. But until the failure of Gorbachev's central reforming endeavor is demonstrated—and that is emphatically not yet the case—those who possess any kind of influence over any of the participants in this drama should include among their concerns the fear of another period of *Nacht und Nebel* in Eastern Europe, and do what they can to diminish its possibility.

ERNEST GELLNER is the author of *Nations and Nationalism* (Cornell University Press) and *State and Society in Soviet Thought* (Blackwell).

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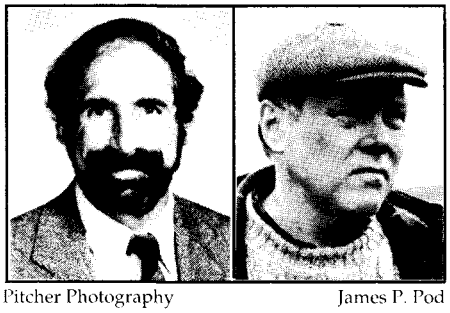

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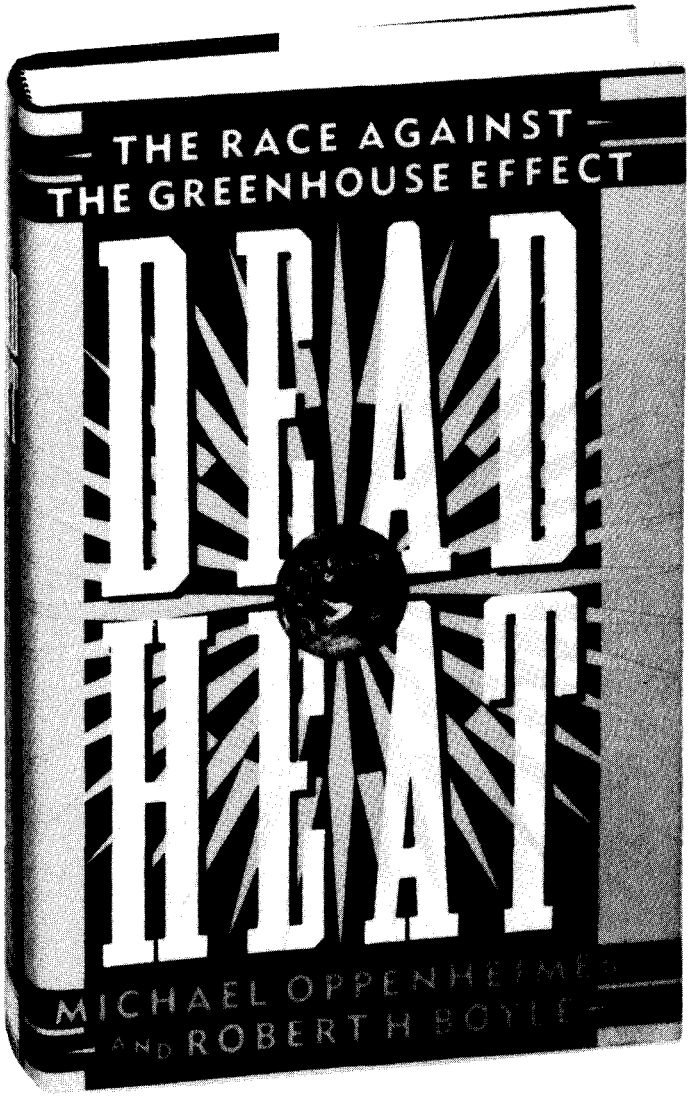

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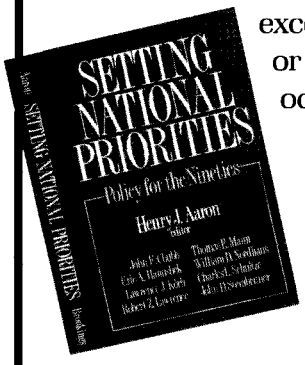

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The Limits of Sainthood

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

Utopian Pessimist: The Life and Thought of Simone Weil
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A Truer Liberty: Simone Weil and Marxism
by Lawrence A. Blum and Victor J. Seidler
(Routledge, 346 pp., $49.50, $17.95 paper)

There are a few rare and troubled souls in this world who find ordinary living nearly impossible. They keep bumping into the edges of life, they keep barking their shins on obstacles that others do not even notice, they give the appearance of struggling through water when the rest of us are striding through the air. They are anguished by what the rest of us accept as the facts of life, and unreconciled to cruelties that the rest of us have shrugged off as the normal lot of the world. Most of us take social life as the only existence there can be, but these souls pine for something better. Our attitude toward such people is always a mixture of admiration for their insight, pity for their suffering, and (it must be admitted) some contempt for the mess they usually make of their lives.

Simone Weil was one of these rare people. In her lifetime, she evoked all of these emotions. Some thought her mad, some thought her inspired, almost everyone felt sorry for her. Her own philosophy teacher called her, with wonder, the Martian. Such is the revenge that ordinary lives take upon the extraordinary. She was the kind of person who made her friends feel relieved that they were not geniuses.

Life was difficult for Weil because she systematically refused to accept who she was. This insistent quarrel with every inherited feature of her fate—her class, her sex, her Jewishness—kept her wading waist-deep against the current of existence. Such a life left her friends divided between admiration for her courage and alarm at her self-destructiveness.

Her relation to her Jewishness typifies her refusal to accept any element of her identity as given. Her mother's family were Russian-born Jews who made a fortune in an import-export business based in Antwerp. Her father's side was a long-established Jewish family from Alsace. Simone, born in 1909 in Paris, grew up in a highly assimilated, free-thinking home. Her father, a genial and unforceful doctor, was apparently a convinced atheist, with a fund of mildly anti-Semitic jokes. It was a family that took its membership in the upper reaches of the French bourgeoisie for granted. The Dreyfus affair seems to have left no visible trace of alarm among the Weils about their status as Jews.

Thus Simone Weil was only speaking the truth when she wrote, in her letter to the Vichy government in 1940 asking why the statute barring Jews from employment in schools should be applied to her:

> I do not know the definition of the word Jew. . . . Does this word designate a race? I have no reason to suppose that I have any sort of tie, either through my father or my

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mother, with the people who lived in Palestine 2,000 years ago. . . . The Hebrew tradition is foreign to me; no text of a law can change that for me.

That may have been the simple truth, and it may even have been typical of assimilated Jews' reaction to the fascists' attribution of an identity they had always refused; but there is something terrible about it all the same. A woman who never lacked courage in denouncing injustice could only think of saying that an odious statute did not apply to her. This was one of those moments when Weil's intransigent individualism—her refusal to accept any attributed or inherited identity—led her to betray an elementary solidarity, when her universalism turned cruel.

Far from being in contradiction to her politics, Weil's refusal to support the Jews follows directly from an excessively abstract account of what motives entitle us to support the oppressed. Precisely because she was a Jew, she would have thought it partial and personal to align herself with the fate of her people. With workers, with the colonial poor, with generalized categories of the oppressed, solidarity was possible, because it was not suspect, because it was free of any tinge of tribalism or self-interest.

In the same way, she was never at home with a Communist politics that appealed to the proletariat in the language of class interests. As Lawrence Blum and Victor Seidler point out in their thorough and insightful study of Weil's vexed relation with Marxian class politics in the 1930s, she respected moral interests a good deal more than material ones. One might also add that she always thought of interests and needs in depersonalized, universal terms, so that neither the Jew nor the worker could ever achieve dignity except by forswearing contingent social identities and putting on the celestial cloth of abstract humanity.

Something more than self-hatred, therefore, or the blindness of the morally exalted was at stake in Weil's attitudes to the fate of the Jewish people. Her passing remark to a Jewish friend in 1942, "You have found the best and only way to solve the Jewish problem: mixed marriage," illustrates her conviction that Jews could only become fully human if they ceased to be Jews. As Seidler and Blum observe, there is something perverse about a theorist who could write so feelingly about human rootlessness and yet never once admit that she had torn up her own Jewish roots with her own hands.

Weil's movement toward Christianity might seem to form part of this disavowal of her Jewish past. David McLellan argues a more subtle and interesting case: that she never became a Catholic precisely because Church doctrine had accepted the punitive, retributive God of the Hebrew Old Testament. As she wrote in one of her letters:

> I have never been able to understand how it is possible for a reasonable mind to regard the Jehovah of the Bible and the Father who is invoked in the Gospel as one and the same being. The influence of the Old Testament and of the Roman Empire, whose tradition was continued by the Papacy, are to my mind the two essential sources of the corruption of Christianity.

As McLellan remarks, "It was her refusal of Israel, every bit as much as her refusal of Rome, that was crucial in her refusal to join the Church."

An intransigent individualism made it impossible for Weil to join anything. Her brother recalled that in the early 1930s an application form for membership in the Communist Party lay in the house, but she could not bring herself to sign it. Instead she hovered on the edges of the Trotskyist left, writing articles for Boris Souvarine's *La revolution proletarienne*, which cast doubt on every article of Trotskyite faith: the inevitability of revolution, the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat, the analysis of the Soviet Union as a deformed worker's state. She invited Trotsky to stay in her parents' home, and then disputed every one of his arguments, until the old revolutionary burst out: "If that's what you think, why are you putting us up? Are you the Salvation Army?"

SIMONE WEIL BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

With characteristic brutality, Trotsky suspected that she was just another of those bourgeois fellow-travelers who value their own moral susceptibilities more than they value building the revolutionary movement. This was unfair. Weil longed to escape the prison house of the bourgeois salon and the moralizing detachment of the intellectual. She had much more firsthand acquaintance with the reality of working people's lives than Trotsky ever did, as she herself pointed out:

> When I think that the great Bolshevik leaders proposed to create a free working class and that doubtless none of them—certainly not Trotsky, and I don't think Lenin either—had ever set foot inside a factory, so that they hadn't the faintest idea of the real conditions which make servitude or freedom for the workers—well, politics seems to be a sinister farce.

In 1935 Weil spent a year in industrial plants near Paris. The experience, agonizing as it was, did give her the authority to cast doubt not only on the empty faith of the French intellectual left in the revolutionary potential of the workers, but also on the Trotskyite and Stalinist claims that the Soviet Union was a worker's state. In Weil's view, Soviet society was a qualitatively new form of social despotism; it combined the capitalist au-

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thoritarianism of Taylorite factory discipline with the fascist authoritarianism of the police state. Her demolition of the leftist orthodoxies of the 1930s was a major intellectual achievement.

It was made possible by the radical individualism of her intellect, her unwillingness to join any orthodoxy, any group, lest it compromise her intellectual independence. Yet the same honorable intellectual intransigence also caused her to make elementary mistakes of political judgment. While Trotsky's jibe against her was unfair, there is some truth in his implication that she was more concerned with being right than with being effective.

Although she went to Spain to fight Franco (she had to be evacuated after shortsightedly stepping into a vat of cooking oil), Weil approved of the Blum government's neutrality on the grounds that anything was better, even a fascist victory in Spain, than a general European war in defense of the embattled republic. Similarly, she approved of Munich and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and even in late 1938 was imagining with a certain grim equanimity German hegemony in Europe: "A war with Europe would be a certain tragedy, in every case, for everyone, from every point of view. A German hegemony in Europe, as bitter as that prospect may be, can in the end turn out not to be a tragedy." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Weil preferred the clean hands of pacifism to the dirty hands of active resistance. While she later repented of her pacifism and joined the Resistance in London, her politics never escapes the charge that she was more interested in the disinterestedness of her own motives than in the effectiveness of her struggle against evil.

Self-sacrifice proved the only way that Weil could imagine reconciling dirty means with pure ends. When she did join the Resistance, she appealed repeatedly for permission to lead a team of nurses who would be parachuted into the front lines, and whose importance, she insisted, lay less in the first aid that they would bring than in the example of sacrifice that they would set. If Hitler could offer the world the sacrificial spectacle of SS warriors, the democracies should offer the competing sight of an elite corps of young women, "supporting, at the point of greatest danger, the prolonged spectacle of wounds and agony." When de Gaulle heard of the plan, he is supposed to have remarked: the woman is mad. One can only be grateful that he had the good sense to realize that her moral style would only jeopardize the lives of others.

In the end, rejected by the Resistance, weakened by tuberculosis and by a frenzied burst of creative work—she wrote more than 800 pages of philosophical manuscript between late 1942 and the spring of 1943—Weil felt that she could only offer up the remains of her life to the national cause. And so she refused to eat, saying that while France was rationed, she would not indulge herself. She died in a sanatorium in Kent in August 1943, convinced, or so I imagine, that she had lived in vain.

In her lifetime Weil published little, and so she would have gone to her grave uncertain whether the "little vein of pure gold" that she believed she had discovered would be passed on. The first selections from her notebooks, articles, and letters—*Waiting for God* and *Gravity and*

My Father's Kierkegaard

We talked in Spanish last night and it took me
back to something years ago.
I was with Bela then, in an over-lighted bar
dropping olive stones folded in paper squares to the floor.
We had been driving and were happy to stand
among the soldiers, coffeeplates in a stack of comforts
set between us.
What happened came a little later that night:
back on the street I noticed a girl, maybe
seventeen, with her mother.
She was pointing out a display—the glass held
her there. We stopped too.
And next to her I was separated a little from Bela.
It was never the same.
I suspect it took away a lot of things.

I told this in Spanish to Laurie
and later heard her sobbing in the shower.
I thought I knew why. But she stayed
so long, sobbed with such release.
The light waited there on the bed.
Her fresh typing lay so clean on her desk
I could have washed in it.

The irony was, I had hoped to say *I remember this*,
and save us with that.
And it must work that way
for she came to bed, still half-wet, the blankets sticking,
and said *at seventeen I was denied.*
And these are just our stories, understand:
"on a given night it rained, in the morning pieces of sky
on the ground . . ."
It is said that in us there was already a story,
forgotten, like a scarf, in some usual way.
And when it's found, fuller than ever of winter,
that this is proof for the immortality of the soul.
In all fairness, it happened like that—a girl with an old woman.

But I remember long before, changing linen with my mother,
probably April, as now, doors open,
and feeling that same sudden separation from her
as she moved through the rooms with inexplicable happiness.
Afterwards I was sure that ordering the house that way
we prepared for our little suicides.
Nothing could help that.
Though I would go back all day to the carrots
she split and let fall in a jar of clean water.
A kind of polytheism to them.

It only began to make sense much later when I discovered
my father's Kierkegaard in a box.
Voicing the Greek, with its slow diacritical attention,
I had a very ordinary vision.
Teacher he had marked in the margin. *Wrong glory,*
crucial differences, Eternal in time.
The text lay marked like a map of a country,
and the loose distances of his ink were resurrected
into a well-weighted fountain pen,
a window holding the town in reflection,
and my father writing those words of Goya:
I saw this. I was witness.

STEWART JAMES

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Grace—established her influence on a postwar Catholic audience. Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI counted her among their foremost intellectual influences, an ironic result for a woman who never yielded in her intransigence toward Rome and the papacy. As Seidler and Blum argue, however, being embraced by the Church restricted her impact on the secular left. It was only after Camus published *Oppression and Liberty*, an edition of her early political writings, that she began to be recognized as a political thinker of note.

But the prescience of Weil's demolition of leftist dogma also limited her influence. The Communist Party's hegemony over French intellectual life exposed her to retrospective condescension, and her criticism of Stalinism did not begin to gain hearers until the vast edifice of actually existing socialism began to creak, then totter, then finally crash into the dust. Weil would have rejoiced that the most effective challenge to communism proved to be religious in inspiration: the Lutherans in East Germany, the Catholics in Solidarity, the Hussite Protestantism in Bohemia. The success of the religious strain in the politics of Eastern Europe has opened up a new channel of receptivity to Weil's work.

Seidler and Blum make much of the affective resonances connecting the Polish Catholics of Solidarity with Weil's spiritualized politics, and they also point out that she has attentive followers among the radical worker priests of Nicaragua and Colombia, indeed among all those in Catholic Latin America who preach the social gospel of solidarity with the exploited poor. These circles are especially receptive to Weil's insistence that politics is about the collective pursuit of dignity and truth, not the pursuit of power and the development of productive forces—and more controversially, that the good of the individual must never be sacrificed to the impersonal goods of party, progress, state, or nation. Whether this will produce a practical politics, or merely a millenarian social gospel, in Latin America remains to be seen. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the re-moralization of political language, the persistence of dignity and honesty in the words and the deeds of the dissidents has been decisive in mobilizing humiliated peoples to overthrow Communist regimes.

In the Western philosophical community, Weil's influence has been slight, in part for reasons that reflect badly not on her, but on the provincialism of Anglo-American philosophy, in particular on its resistance to the religious idiom of much

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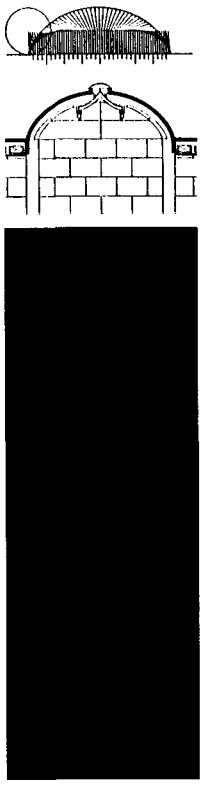

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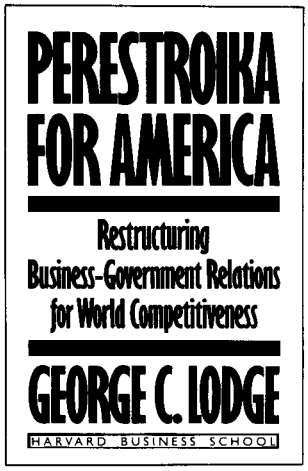

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of her thought. Wittgenstein was the philosophical figure closest to her in his interest in spiritual questions, and it is not surprising that it has been among former pupils and admirers of Wittgenstein, like Peter Winch, that Weil has been taken seriously as a philosopher. Winch does his best to make sense of her philosophical position, from her days as a student of Descartes under the philosopher Alain to her finally philosophical outpourings in London. But his close and rigorous analysis cannot quite allay the suspicion that her work is too personal and too fragmentary to satisfy a philosopher's ideal of rigor.

In liberal capitalist countries, the influence of Weil's political thought, of her criticism of the liberalism of rights, has been slight. Her political writing seems to have illiberal implications. Her dissent from rights-based theories of the political good—in *The Need for Roots* and elsewhere—never managed to balance liberty and authority in a manner that would win her liberal adherents. (*The Need for Roots* had a preface by T. S. Eliot.) Her extraordinary essay on "Human Personality" of 1943 was as hostile to liberalism as it was to totalitarianism, both of which were attacked from the same spiritual point of regard, and included the rather unforgettable observation that "one cannot imagine St. Francis talking about rights."

As McLellan points out, Weil was unable to reconcile her belief in "complete, unlimited freedom of expression" with her equally firm belief that the press should never have the right to question the eternal obligations toward human beings that she wanted to enshrine in the constitution of postwar France. Her understandable dislike of the scurrility of the right-wing press during the Third Republic led her to believe that the "need for truth" ought to prevail over rights to freedom of expression. A certain Jacobin rectitude led her to justify suppression of the press "not only for offenses against moral principles," but even "for baseness of tone and thought, bad taste, vulgarity, or a subtly corrupting moral atmosphere." Because she also believed that political parties had corrupted public opinion in the Third Republic, she argued that no political group should have the right to express opinions. Any collective expression of opinion would tyrannize over the individual conscience.

The best that can be said about all this is that Weil's anti-parliamentarianism and her dislike of the pre-war press were widely shared in the Resistance. But finally not much good can be said about it: even when allowances are made, it is clear that this most individualistic of political thinkers ended up unwilling to put her trust in the autonomy of the individual's judgment. She felt, rather, that enlightened institutions of her own devising were necessary before individuals could become free, and for this reason her doctrines have never had much appeal for liberals.

All of the new books about Weil argue for her relevance as a political theorist, but they all miss the sense in which she was resolutely anti-political. She didn't like rights because they were specific, precise, and enforceable by law, and as such truncated the full compass of the human good. She preferred to talk of human needs and the human obligations that, in her view, followed eternally and irrevocably from these needs. But surely it is an illusion, a dangerous illusion, to suppose that a politics can be based on supposedly indubitable facts of human nature. The human good is conflictual; moral conflict is real, and a regular feature of the social world; people disagree about what people need. That is where politics comes in.

The language of rights represents the extent of our agreement about human ends, the degree to which we accept that certain human needs entitle certain individuals to certain goods. To denounce the language of rights, as Weil did, in the name of some eternal verity about human obligation was not merely to suppose that her wisdom was superior to the wisdom of ordinary, contending individuals; it was also to deny politics its vocation, which is the adjudication of irreconcilable conflict between competing human ends. Post-Marxist critics like Blum and Seidler do their best to rehabilitate Weil as a trenchant critic of liberalism. The problem is that she did not so much criticize liberalism as bypass the conflicts and the perplexities that liberalism makes it its business to resolve. In denying that human ends were in conflict, Weil was wishing away politics altogether.

Weil is pertinent, however, as a warning to liberalism about its blind spots. She eloquently gave a voice to the needs—for dignity, for rootedness, for respect—that pass into liberal politics in the overly attenuated precision of the language of rights, or get banalized in the empty oratory of political appeal. Weil's language of needs may be anti-political, in the sense that one cannot imagine a practical politics that could satisfy them, but that does not make her language altogether useless. Quite the contrary: when politicians prattle about human dignity, it is helpful to have someone like Weil at hand to remind us what such words mean, to remind us that protecting people's rights does not exhaust what we have to do to protect their dignity. As Winch observes, her writing is valuable because it insists on the immense distance that separates giving people their rights and giving them justice:

> The inspiration for a demand for rights may well be a concern for justice; it may be that in some circumstances to struggle for rights is the best way of struggling for justice. But that does not mean that the struggle for justice is the same as the struggle for rights. . . . If the distinction is forgotten, there is the danger that a concern for rights will take one farther and farther away from justice; or that the quest for justice will be entirely submerged.

All these books argue that Weil's work should be judged apart from the tragic and sensational features of her brief life. Seidler and Blum are particularly insistent that the reputation of her life has overshadowed and distorted the reception of her work. They are right to be concerned about the potential injustice of ad feminam readings of her extraordinary writing, but in the end it really is not possible to separate her work from her life. The extreme angularity of her thought, to use McLellan's fine word, makes sense only when we consider the extreme angularity of her life. McLellan's book is by far the most successful, largely because it treats life and work as one, and helps us to see how her singular psychology resulted in a singular body of work.

Still, about one central puzzle of that psychology—Weil's anguished relation to her own femininity—McLellan's treatment is less satisfactory, not surprisingly, than her female biographer Gabriella Fiori. Fiori ably argues that Weil considered it a singular misfortune to have been born a woman. Her mother once called her a son, and between 1925 and 1928 Weil actually signed her letters home, your respectful son. In the Luxemburg Gardens a man exposed himself to the adolescent Weil, and she concluded that it was too grotesque and humiliating ever to be the object of a man's physical desire; she remained celibate thereafter. When asked to sign petitions on the status of women, she always said curtly, "I am not a feminist."

No twentieth-century philosopher has written more touchingly than Weil about the need for love and yet been more averse to its reality. Fiori traces this paradox back to her family life:

> Hers was a mad naïveté. For this reason she tended to mythologize persons and thus to place too much confidence in

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them. This naïveté was always associated with an inner infantilism; on the one hand there was an extreme purity and on the other, an inability to accept the life of a grown woman on a daily basis. In this infantilism she remained tied to her family, especially to her mother.

All her life she appeared to be running away from a mother who adored her, who chased after her when she left to fight in Spain, who descended on her miserable flats to darn and cook whenever her daughter's self-neglect threatened to turn pathological, whose love—suffocating and forgiving by turns—was the paradigm of the human connection that Weil sought all her life, and of the human connection that she recoiled from. No theorist of love has ever put such stress on the conflict between loyalty to love and the need for liberty.

In Weil's mind, there was an indissociable link between liberty and purity. Chastity, she wrote, was indispensable to love. "From the instant that there is need, desire, even reciprocal, there is outrage." This insistence that one could be free only if one was alone, free only if one was pure, placed a tormenting strain on someone who (to judge from her friends) ached for companionship and made rootedness in a community the central value of her political philosophy.

The same desolate equation of freedom with solitude recurs in Weil's religious writing. One might have thought that, at least once, in mystical communion with her God, she might have overcome her overpowering conviction of separateness and isolation. Yet in a haunting passage she describes the encounter with God as a missed rendezvous between lovers: "Each is there before the time, but each at a different place and they wait and wait and wait. He stands motionless, nailed to the spot for the whole of time. She is distraught and impatient. But alas for her if she gets tired and goes away." Weil wrote of prayer and meditation not as communion, not as an end to solitude, but as an agonized and endless period of waiting.

No thinker sought more tenaciously, some might say more masochistically, to escape the prison of his or her selfhood. No thinker ended up more completely imprisoned in the confinement of his own personality. Her final prayers to God must be read as a plea to be delivered from her intransigent self: the classic mystical ambition. Weil hoped, as she waited, that God might deprive her of will, of sight, of hearing, of speech, that he might reduce her to the condition of the most benighted idiocy, so that, "insensible to

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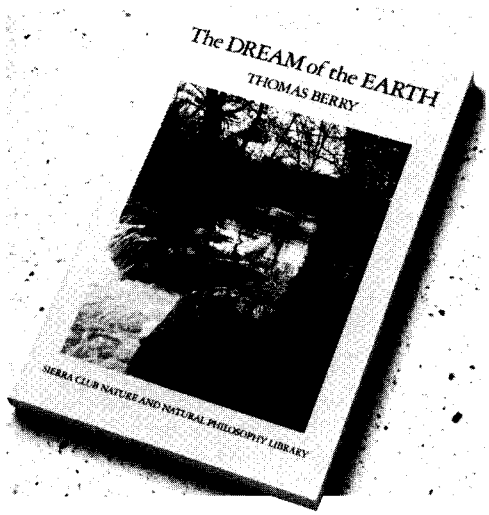

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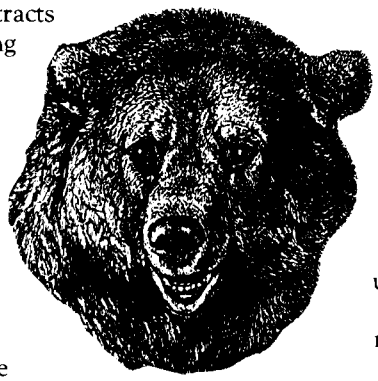

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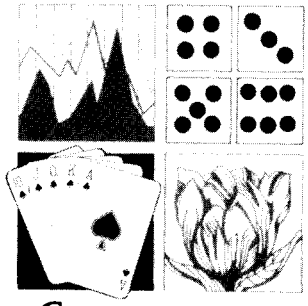

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every kind of grief and joy, and incapable of any love for any being or thing, not even for myself," she might at last be freed from self and united with the divine. Obliterated at last, she would then achieve, at last, and by God's grace, an end to the solitude that tormented her.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF, a columnist for *The Observer* in London, is the author most recently of *The Russia Album* (Penguin).

Disorder in the Courts

BY STANLEY KATZ

The Transformation of Criminal Justice: Philadelphia, 1800-1880 by Allen Steinberg

(University of North Carolina Press, 336 pp., $47.50)

Litigiousness has long been considered the American vice. And it is supposed to be getting worse all the time. Our language has expanded to describe the phenomenon: "the litigation explosion," "legal pollution," and "hyperlexis" have been coined to account for the assumption of increasingly aggressive resort to the courts. As the sociologist-lawyer Marc Galanter has observed:

> A citizenry of unparalleled contentiousness exercises a hair-trigger readiness to invoke the law, asking courts to address both trifles unworthy of them and social problems beyond their grasp. . . . These observers would have us believe that we suffer from too much law, too many lawyers, courts that take on too much—and an excessive readiness to utilize all of them.

Galanter argued persuasively, in 1983, that "it ain't so." The apparent increase in litigiousness, generally interpreted as "an eruption of pathological contentiousness, a dangerous and unprecedented loosening of needed restraints, or the breakdown either of a common ethos or of community regulation," is illusory on two counts. First, the litigation rate of the recent past (Galanter measured the mid-1970s) is about half of what it was 150 years ago (even though the total number of court filings has grown "more than twenty-seven times from the 1820s to the 1970s"). Second, the modern numerical increases in litigation constitute an adaptive response to changing social conditions: the increase in physical injuries due to technological innovation, the "great increase in social knowledge about the causation" of such injuries, the growth of government, and the expanding social conviction that the harm from injuries should be remedied. "In the light of all these changes," Galanter contended, "the pattern of use is conservative, departing relatively little from earlier patterns."

Galanter's history is surely correct. We now know that Americans of the seventeenth century resorted to the civil courts at the drop of a pin—or a word. The records of the courts of Massachusetts Bay Colony are replete with actions for even the most trivial harms to land, animals, houses, persons, and dignity. We are discovering that the social history of colonial America can be written from court records, since a high proportion of colonial Americans used the law to defend their interests. An eighteenth-century New Yorker was much more likely to know the law (and what the inside of a courtroom looked like) than a constituent of Mayor Dinkins would. This discovery has led some historians to speculate that such "litigiousness" was in fact the reason that social cohesion was relatively high during the colonial era. Better to fight in the courts than in the barnyard.

These insights are crucial to understanding the role of the civil law (which governs private suits between individuals) in the contemporary United States, though they will give little consolation to those who dream of a conflict-free, *gemeinschaftliche* era of the past. Unfortunately, the historian of each epoch concludes that the golden era must have been in some period previous to the one she is currently studying. Such generalizations are, however, much more difficult to make for criminal litigation, whose history in the United States is much less well known. The popular assumption seems to be that crime rates are constantly increasing, but that criminal process has always been pretty much the same as it is now.

In his first book, the brilliant young historian Allen Steinberg tells the complicated story of how our criminal law was in fact radically transformed during the nineteenth century. Recognizing that

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there is actually no such thing as "our" (that is, national) criminal law, apart from the relatively limited federal jurisdiction, Steinberg focuses on a single city, Philadelphia, for analysis. We cannot, in truth, tell whether Philadelphia stands for all contemporaneous American cities (much less for all rural areas), but Steinberg provides us, for the first time, with a tantalizing hint of the nature of what was probably a more general criminal process.

He begins with the observation of the Philadelphia judge John Bouvier in 1836 that "among the evils which our fellow citizens suffer, particularly among the poorer classes, is the spirit of litigation. . . . Having no property about which to quarrel, too many . . . come into [criminal] court for redress." The modern lawyer would ask, "How did they get into court?" After all, today we know that we can readily gain access to the civil courts simply by bringing an action against another person, but we need to move a district attorney and a grand jury in order to initiate a prosecution in a criminal court. The public prosecutor officially initiates the action, which is styled the People vs. Smith rather than Doe vs. Smith.

The answer is that, until the mid-nineteenth century, American criminal actions frequently took the form of Doe vs. Smith. The dominant mode of prosecution, in other words, was by private individuals rather than state officials:

> Private prosecution refers to the system by which private citizens brought criminal cases to the attention of court officials, initiated the process of prosecution, and retained considerable control over the ultimate disposition of cases—especially when compared with the two main executive authorities of criminal justice, the police and the public prosecutor.

This was the traditional English mode of criminal procedure. Steinberg contends that the process had broad social implications: it was, "like other aspects of early national politics and government, popular, particularistic, and extremely locally based." It opened the criminal courts directly to the people. More negatively, however, it was also "flexible, subject to exploitation, and often, relative to the formal law, quite corrupt." Steinberg's book is the story of how this localistic system was "reformed" to produce the modern system of public prosecution—with unexpected (and mostly undesirable) results.

Steinberg shows how, in the first half of the nineteenth century, citizens effectively controlled the criminal justice system. While grand jury indictments were required to bring criminal cases before

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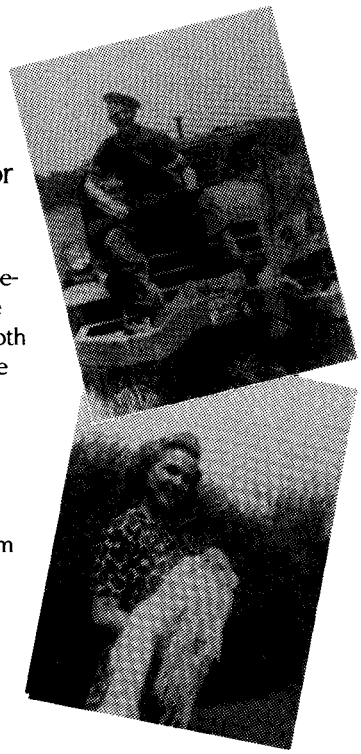

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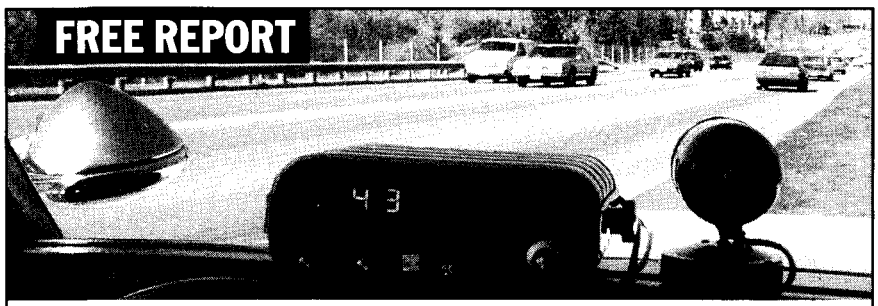

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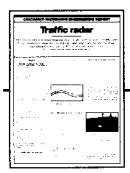

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the judges of the courts of record, individuals could prosecute others who had offended them before magistrates (who were also the governing officials of the municipality). Such prosecutions pitted neighbor versus neighbor in informal proceedings before lay judges, who profited from the system through the fees they were paid for conducting each case. The "judges" of these lower courts thus had an incentive to encourage private prosecutions, which were in any case necessary since Philadelphia had virtually no formal police force before the middle of the century. It was, Steinberg argues, "a coherent system of criminal justice, based on a voluntary popular participation in which virtually everyone believed," although it was inefficient, sometimes unfair, and hard to control.

The flavor of the private prosecutory system was unmistakably personal, chaotic, petty—and Dickensian. It was lampooned by a grand jury foreman in 1863:

> Mrs. Fightall's little boy Mike, aged 4, pushes Mrs. Fireup's little girl Sally, aged 5, into the gutter, for not giving him any of her peanuts, in doing which Sally's clothes were soiled, whereupon Mrs. Fireup sues a warrant upon the oath of the mother, who did not see the circumstances, but has only heard the child say so, as she knows the little puss would not tell an untruth. Mrs. Fightall is arrested, arraigned, and required to give bail at once, failing to find which, it is suggested that he, Mr. Graball can prevail upon Mr. Alwaysdry to go her bail, provided she brings a cross-action, which will compel Mrs. Fireup to either withdraw her suit or settle the case, all of which will cost her but $1, which she pays over, and these two cases are finally submitted for the consideration of 24 citizens [the grand jury], and these two neighbors of long standing are made inveterate foes, whereas, by one kind word of the magistrate, their friendship might have been more firmly cemented.

This aspect of private prosecution acknowledged and set aside, Steinberg concludes that "the system continued to be characterized by individuals asserting their rights, both substantively regarding their relations with other individuals and procedurally regarding their ability to mobilize the law. . . ." The system was, he writes, "a source of individual power with state backing that was employed by one citizen against another, not a source of state power that was extended over the citizenry in general by an external (even if democratically chosen) authority."

Despite this populist attribute, private prosecution was placed high on the hit list of Philadelphia reformers after the turn of the century. Their animus derived from their dislike of the fee system for private prosecutions, which they believed encouraged corruption, and from their distaste for the magistrates, who converted their petty but populist judicial power into a dangerous political asset. The reformers were concerned with politics rather than criminal justice, but limitation on the private prosecution jurisdiction seemed to them necessary to secure responsible government from elected officials.

This agenda of reform converged with the need to control street violence in Philadelphia. As urban riots became more frequent from the 1830s to the middle of the century, reform opinion decided that public order would best be attained by increasing municipal forces and public control of criminal prosecution of those who broke the public peace. By 1850 a series of uncontrollable riots had convinced the city's elite that the police force would need to be more than doubled in size, controlled centrally, and professionalized. They also pushed through a law changing the public prosecutor's title to district attorney, made the office elective, and required him to sign all bills of indictment and "conduct in court all criminal or other prosecutions in the name of the commonwealth."

Public prosecution thus arrived with the second half of the century, and it succeeded in controlling the rioters, though "it did little else." Steinberg shows clearly that the consolidation of the Philadelphia police department in 1854, which resulted from a compromise between the reformers and the politicians, produced an alliance between the police and the former magistrates (now styled police magistrates) that resulted in a regionalized system of criminal justice only formally distinguishable from the old machinery of private prosecution. The main change was the tangible presence of police on the streets of the city, and a growing disrespect for criminal law among Philadelphians.

Steinberg concludes his story with the adoption of the new state constitution of 1873, which formalized a new, centralized criminal court system and abolished the magistrates. Private prosecution and the legal culture that it created were in a position truly to become a thing of the past. The now dominant features of the criminal justice system represented a new passive relationship of the citizenry to the state, born of the idea that there was a special, "dangerous" class of citizens who were the proper objects of the system's punitive and benevolent activity.

The new system was dominated by a professional police force and magistrates who were salaried officials of the state; it employed primarily state prosecutions, and punished offenders by incarceration in a county prison and the state penitentiary. This made criminal prosecution free (rather than fee-based), but it "delegitimated the relationship through which the citizenry had exercised considerable control over the process of prosecution and through which there had been widespread and ready access to the criminal law." This, says Steinberg, introduced a "bureaucratic and coercive relationship between the police and the people."

Steinberg believes that criminal justice reform was part and parcel of the late nineteenth-century mugwump pressure for the creation of the administrative state. The drive toward centralized institutional power was a conscious activity among those who stood, in different ways, to benefit from it by gaining power

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and prestige—lawyers, reformers, businessmen, and even politicians with a municipal vision. "Those who had the most to lose," he adds, "those who would move from litigants to clients and suspects, resisted in various ways and have remained the institutional state's most recalcitrant problem." He concludes with a rather nostalgic reference back to the more democratic and citizen-based aspects of private prosecution, and wonders whether we can still recover that "more vibrant and participatory" method of regulating our own behavior.

This is the best sort of serious history in the service of public policy. Steinberg shows how criminal litigation has been alive and voluminous for a century and a half, and thus, at least inferentially, that contemporary social failings alone cannot explain the predominance of the criminal courts in our daily lives. But his point is more subtle and important. It is not so much the volume of criminal prosecutions that should worry us (though worry us it must), but rather the origin and the character of the litigation. Once, at least, the people attempted to control themselves through criminal law, but now we have handed that responsibility over to a state that has become more and more remote from our daily lives.

Can we really recover the traditions of private prosecution? Steinberg does not address the problem, but it seems unlikely. Steinberg himself recognizes that only the administrative state was capable of controlling the most threatening forms of public violence in the mid-nineteenth century. And in his final sentence (possibly an unwise throwaway line) he asks whether, in order to recover the old ways, "we must less frequently be clients and suspects in order more often to be citizens." Contemporary political reactionaries whom Steinberg presumably despises would agree with this analysis—which perhaps should give him pause.

Steinberg's book alerts us to the fact that substantial criminal litigation is probably not to be diminished by nostalgic nostrums. It also suggests that we once had a preferable method of bringing criminal prosecutions, based on the initiative of individual citizens. To be sure, it does little to demonstrate how we might recover the virtues of private prosecution, or if they would suffice in our increasingly diverse and diffuse society; but historians predict the past, not the future.

STANLEY KATZ is president of the American Council of Learned Societies and a legal historian.

TRB *continued from page 4*

That's one of the things about air. And a recent study—controverted, to be sure—says that ethanol cuts carbon monoxide but *increases* nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons, for a net increase in smog.

Gasoline using ethanol gets an exemption of six cents a gallon from the federal gas tax. Since ethanol is only one-tenth of the combined product, this amounts to a whopping sixty-cents-a-gallon subsidy for ethanol itself, which otherwise would be uncompetitive. Including state tax breaks, the total government subsidy for ethanol since 1980 has been $4.6 billion. The government gave lavish tax credits and loan guarantees for construction of ethanol plants, and even has given free surplus corn to ethanol producers. ADM has three-quarters of the ethanol market. Thanks to ethanol, says the ad, "we don't need as much foreign oil." In fact, it takes more energy to produce the corn and turn it into ethanol than the ethanol itself replaces.

Most mysterious. A recent addition to the ADM canon is similar in setting—a woman pumping gas into her car—but darker in tone. Remember all that stuff you heard during the last commercial break about how the air is getting cleaner—"especially for kids"? Well, forget it. "Every day there's a grim reminder hanging in the air over our cities, and . . . we all have to be concerned." Gasoline has gotten cleaner? No, "gasoline has gotten dirtier. The chief culprit is benzene, a known deadly carcinogen." Poisonous gasoline vapors are threatening—yes—the children (shown tucked in sweet unknowing innocence in the back seat).

What to do? ADM recommends a procedure for pumping gas just short of the precautions you might take for changing the rods in a nuclear power plant. "Keep all of your car windows rolled up, so that the fumes can't get inside. Stand upwind or away from the nozzle. And if you get gas on your hands, be sure to wash it off. This message is brought to you in the interest of a cleaner, safer environment by the Archer Daniels Midland Company."

How thoughtful. But why this sudden concern about benzene? I looked up a *Washington Post* article referred to in the commercial and, unsurprisingly, it turned out that benzene and ethanol are competing additives for meeting clean air standards. All the horrorshow about standing upwind is just part of a campaign to get benzene banned or ethanol made mandatory. Maybe they're even right about benzene, but it's typical of the ADM method—and certainly gives you no confidence in their position—that they would approach the issue so obliquely.

You can almost count on any bit of ADM civic braggadocio to turn out to be dubious. So I was more pleased than shocked to learn that ADM's much-self-touted cornstarch additive for plastics—the one that supposedly causes them to decompose quicker in landfill—is widely considered pointless by environmentalists. It turns pieces of plastic into plastic powder. Maybe the high-fiber, low-fat, cholesterol-free vegetarian patty promoted in yet another ad is actually the boon to humankind ADM claims. But, knowing ADM, you have to wonder what's the catch.

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PARIS DIARIST

Soft on hard-liners

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV IS THE toast of Washington, but at home he is under siege. Against Boris Yeltsin—who just got himself elected president of the Russian Soviet Federated Republic, which is something like being governor of New York, Texas, California, Florida, and Illinois combined—Gorbachev wouldn't stand a chance. And his government now fears the people power of the streets. Whom the gods would destroy they first tempt, it seems, with the thought that people power is on their side. Ditto the power of self-determination; and ditto that of Muslim fanaticism. All three of these powers are now turned on Moscow. It's enough to make one suspect there is a just God after all.

JUSTLY OR NOT, GOD APPEARS TO be taking a stern line with Mikhail Sergeyevich. The man who six months ago was proclaimed *Time*'s Man of the Decade is now reduced to relying for his survival on George Bush, James Baker, and what they will throw his way. Given Gorbachev's desperate circumstances, which is to say the proximity of the USSR to anarchy and famine, his way in the world is still braggadocio, the habit of tyrants. A democrat, certainly, he is not. He is quick to take back what he has given. Almost every day brings a story showing how thin is the commitment to glasnost. When a majority of the Moscow and Leningrad city councils was won by anti-Gorbachev liberals in local elections, Gorbachev simply diminished their powers. No sooner had the famous literary journal *Novy Mir* begun to serialize Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* than it found itself without paper on which to publish anything. Razz Gorbachev and a new law says you may spend six years in the gulag yourself. All of this suggests that the authorities have plenty of reason to fear the undercurrents in their own society. The USSR still deploys the nuclear weapon. But in no other way can it rightly be counted a superpower. Even Lenin's minimal promise of "electricity plus soviets" has not been kept in much of the country. It is true that, despite an epidemic of suicides and thousands of draft resisters, there remain 4 million men under arms, more than a few of them devoted mainly to protecting statues of this same Lenin from saboteurs. No one can really be sure that the Red Army is any longer to be trusted to perform more onerous tasks. Gorbachev may, then, simply be bluffing when he threatens to keep his forces in Eastern Europe indefinitely if NATO won't let him win the battle for a neutral Germany that he and his predecessors lost over four decades. The fact is that, were it not for the indulgence shown him by Bush and Baker, he would be seen to be bluffing on every issue on which he is now taking the hard line: from Baltic independence to reductions in conventional forces. This is to say that the Bush administration has brought upon itself Gorbachev's recalcitrance.

SO THE QUESTION IS: WHY HAVE the president and his secretary of state been so indulgent with Comrade Gorbachev? I have one answer. But it is not exactly an explanation. Bush and Baker have made it a habit to appease the adversaries of democracy. Last week was the week when Washington again extended favored nation trading status to Beijing. An administration that extends assistance and solidarity to the regime of Deng Xiaoping will not naturally be prone to puzzle whether it should do the same for the crowd-pleasing Gorbachev. It is, to be sure, instructive to recall the awe with which the West not so long ago approached Deng Xiaoping. Were not his capitalist reforms even more far-reaching than Gorbachev's? The hopes for China, so ebullient and so misplaced, turned last year to blood and ashes. Who will guarantee no similar fate for our hopes about the Soviet Union?

BUSH AND BAKER CAN MAKE NO such guarantee, of course. Nonetheless they have made the mistake of binding their fortunes too closely to Gorbachev's, not putting prudent distance between themselves and him. In America today that binding seems to risk little: the Democrats are so eager to misspend the "peace dividend" that they'd gladly overlook (and rationalize) Gorbachev's misdeeds. The rush to do so over Lithuania (even in these pages, if you read between the lines) is a case in point. So it is not to a democratic and thus deimperialized Soviet Union that the United States has extended its hand. It is to one man. That man's democratic bona fides are suspect in the most telling quarters, among his own people. Should he choose to maintain power against popular movements either by massive force or by alliance with the party's wholly unreconstructed elements, it will be too late for Bush and Baker. The opposition will conveniently forget its own enchantments. And Gorbachev will be on Bush and Baker's hands, and on their consciences, if they have any to speak of.

THERE IS ANOTHER COMPONENT to the Bush-Baker paradigm of rewarding our enemies. It is punishing our friends. When Baker indicated that he might support the sending of a U.N. observer force to the occupied territories, in one stroke he brought Israeli dove and Israeli hawks together. And he showed yet again how little he knows about the history of this conflict. The U.N. forfeited its credentials as regards the safety of Israel in May 1967, when U Thant withdrew its forces as soon as Gamal Abdel Nasser instructed him to. Wherever the U.N. flag has flown in the region, in fact, it has proved itself at once partisan and incompetent. Its one monument is the network of refugee camps in which the Palestinian leadership has insisted that even the fourth generation nurse its grievances; it is a curious monument, evidence of its complicity in the long Arab war against Israel. (If I were the Israelis I'd respond to this idea by expelling the U.N. personnel already stationed in the country. Why should a sovereign state continue to welcome their mischief?) After a few days the United States did reverse itself on the proposal about the U.N., and now both the Arabs and Israel are furious at this master diplomat from Texas. So OK, James Baker doesn't know much about this neighborhood. But he knows that around the world, on a daily basis, governments routinely brutalize those they think of as enemies. In late May Indian troops massacred, unprovoked, more than sixty mourners—some say more than 100—at a funeral of a slain Muslim religious leader in Kashmir. A few days later Pakistani police killed fifty-seven marchers. The number killed in Kashmir in the last four months overwhelms the fatalities in the Palestinian revolt since late 1987. Have Baker or Bush proposed a U.N. presence in Kashmir? Have they even uttered a single word critical of India? Not that I've read. They're too busy moralizing against the Jews. This will have its echoes in Baghdad, where Saddam Hussein is right now presiding over an Arab summit. What does it say about the political culture of the Arab world that its summit should be held under his auspices? That summit has been encouraged to an ever harder-line by the ignorant intrusions of the American administration. And by its clear but clumsy effort to appease the hardest-liner of them all, the president of Iraq, the murderer of tens of thousands of Kurds and Shiites, and also Arafat's chief ally. An administration that tries to propitiate Hussein won't have any doubts about propitiating Gorbachev, or about propelling him either.

MARTIN PERETZ

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Un-common policy sense.

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NATO at 40 edited by Ted Galen Carpenter. In this volume 17 distinguished policymakers, scholars, and policy analysts assess the value of the NATO alliance after 40 years. They question continuation of the U.S. financial drain in the face of federal budget deficits and changing circumstances in Europe. 1990/274 pp./$39.95 cloth/ $14.95 paper

The Economic Consequences of Immigration by Julian L. Simon. Drawing on a wide range of data covering long stretches of history, the author presents startling findings that squarely contradict much of the conventional wisdom concerning immigration. He concludes that it is, on the whole, beneficial to U.S. natives. 1989/432 pp./ $24.95 cloth

The Crisis in Drug Prohibition edited by David Boaz. The contributors to this book argue that, as did the prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s, drug prohibition—not drug use—is causing today's alarming crime rates, as well as corruption, the spread of AIDS, and abuses of civil liberties. The contributors, including Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, Princeton professor Ethan Nadelmann, and attorney James Ostrowski, agree that some form of decriminalization is in order. 1990/134 pp./$8.00 paper

The Excluded Americans by William Tucker. Tucker examines the problem of homelessness as a true investigative reporter should—both by camping out with the homeless in Grand Central Station and by analyzing the data of the social scientists. He concludes that homelessness is largely the result of rent control and zoning policies. 1990/256 pp./$17.95 cloth

The Politics of Plunder by Doug Bandow. In this collection of columns on policy issues ranging from agricultural subsidies to gay rights, Bandow shows how politicians and bureaucrats have failed to respect the Founding Fathers' intent to create a government of limited powers. 1990/507 pp./$34.95 cloth

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In Bangkok, good things come in enormous packages.

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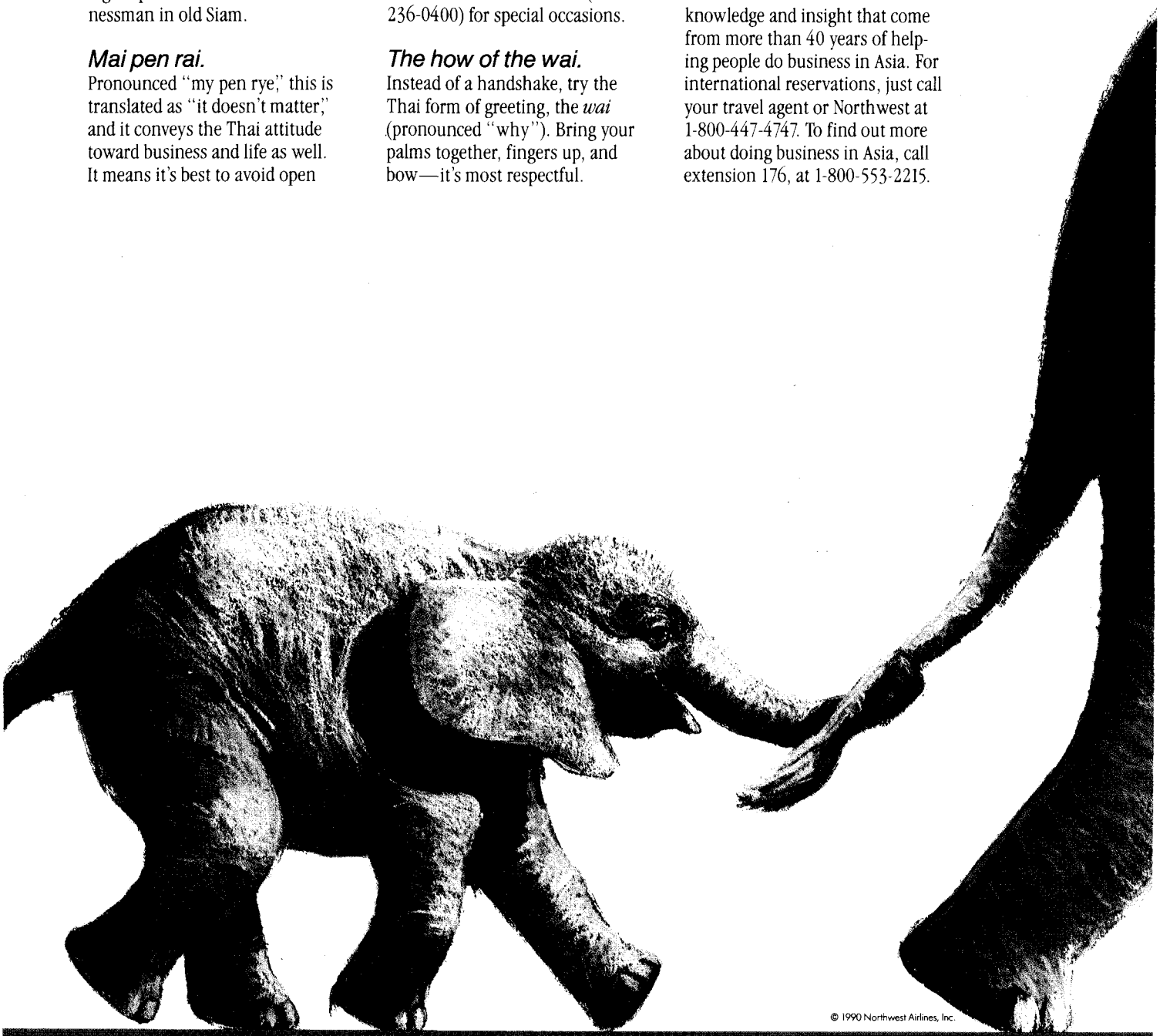

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